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(51) INT CL[5]
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(52) UK CL (Edition L)
H4J JGC J30F

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JP 020239798 A US 4472834 A US 4399328 A

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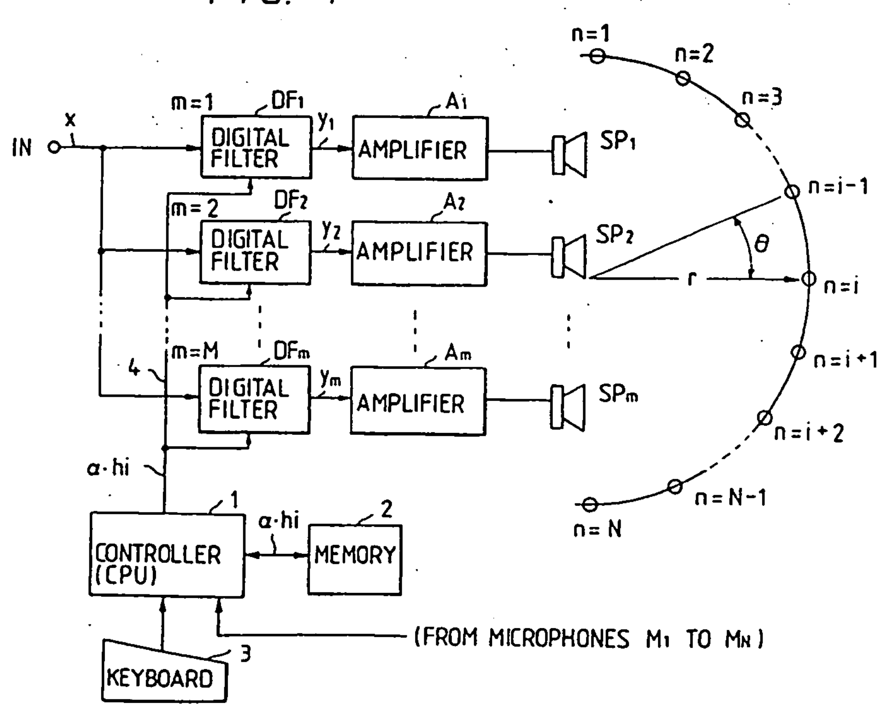
UK CL (Edition K) H4J JGB JGC JGX, H4R RSX
INT CL[5] H04R 1/20 1/32 1/40 3/12 3/14 27/00
Online databases: WPI

(54) **Method of controlling the directivity of a loudspeaker array**

(57) A speaker system includes a common input terminal IN for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated from several speaker units SP_1, to SP_m. A digital filter DF_1 to DF_m is respectively connected between the common input terminal and each speaker unit. Each digital filter DF_1 to DF_m has filter coefficients which are set to reproduce a required pattern of directivity. The speaker units are arranged linearly, in a matrix form (Fig. 25) or in a honeycomb form (Fig. 32).

The filter characteristics are determined by a non-linear optimization method.

FIG. 1



GB 2 259 426 A

FIG. 1

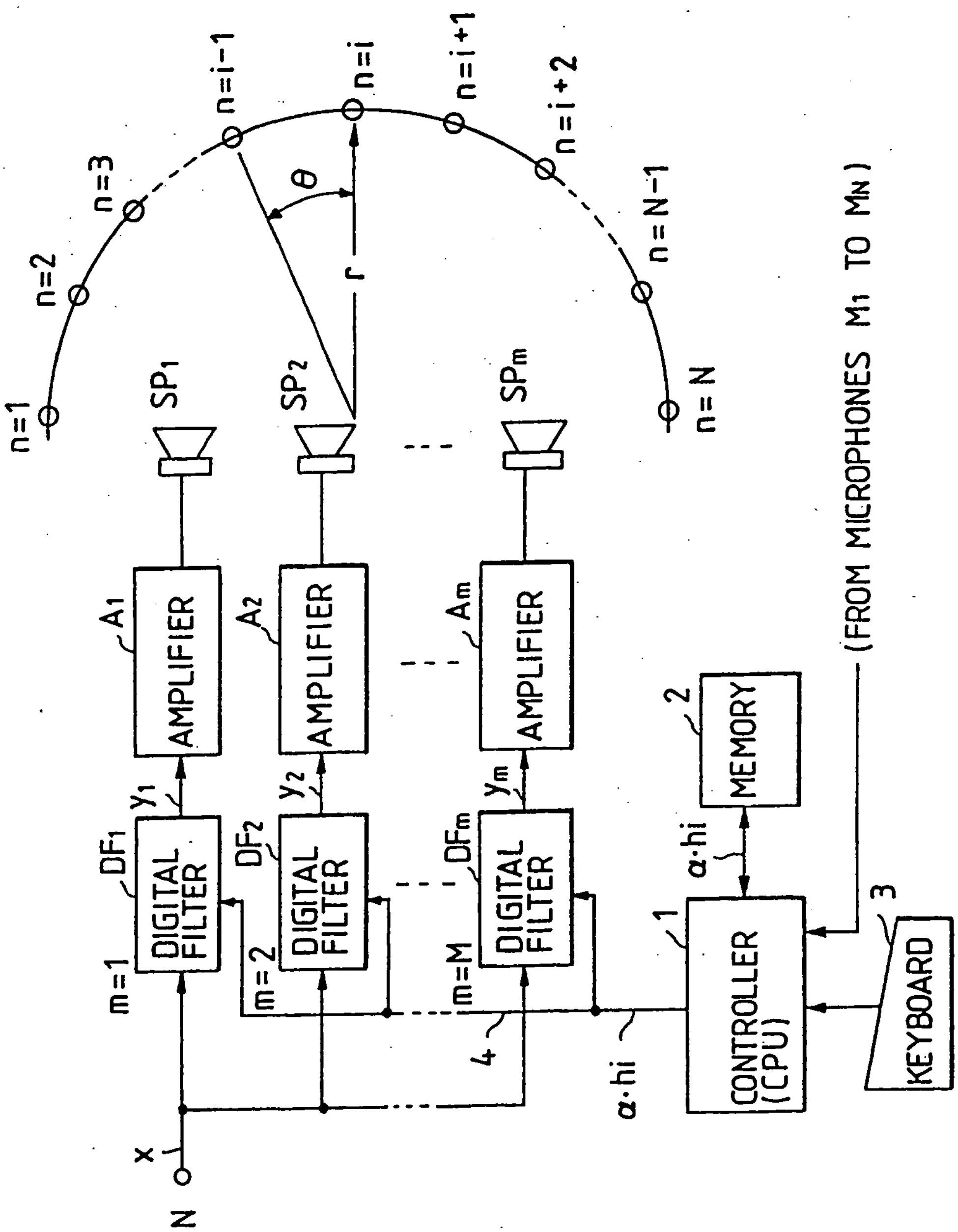

IN
x
m=1
m=2
m=M
4
α·hi
DIGITAL FILTER
DF1
DF2
DFm
y1
y2
ym
AMPLIFIER
A1
A2
Am
SP1
SP2
SPm
n=1
n=2
n=3
n=i-1
n=i
n=i+1
n=i+2
n=N-1
n=N
θ
r
MEMORY
2
CONTROLLER (CPU)
1
KEYBOARD
3
(FROM MICROPHONES M1 TO MN)

FIG. 2

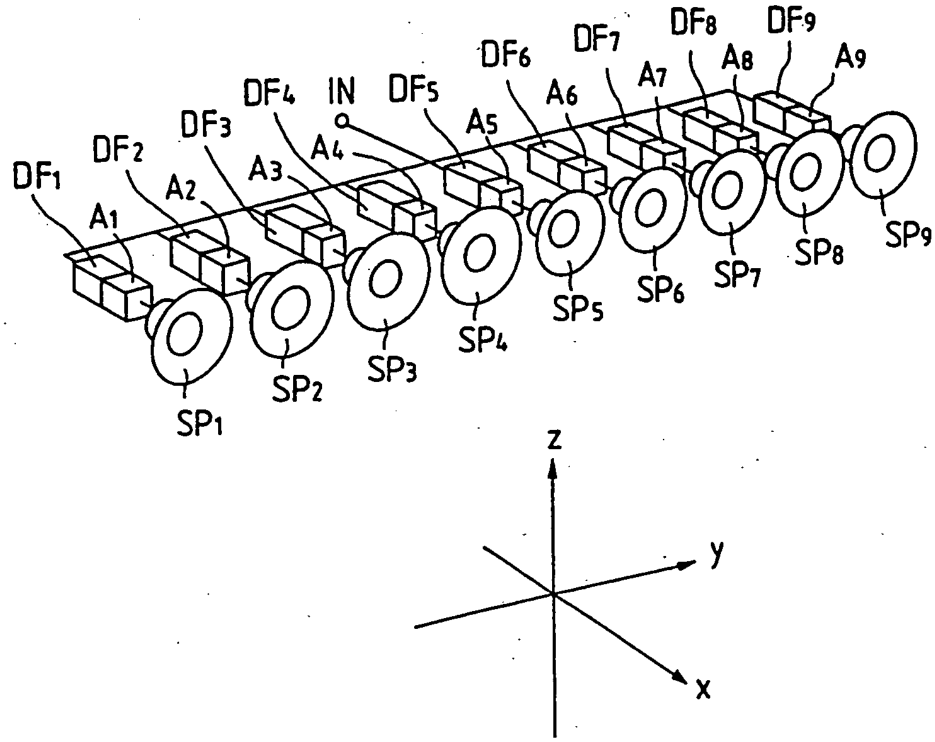

DF1
A1
DF2
A2
DF3
A3
DF4
IN
A4
DF5
A5
DF6
A6
DF7
A7
DF8
A8
DF9
A9
SP1
SP2
SP3
SP4
SP5
SP6
SP7
SP8
SP9
z
y
x

FIG. 4

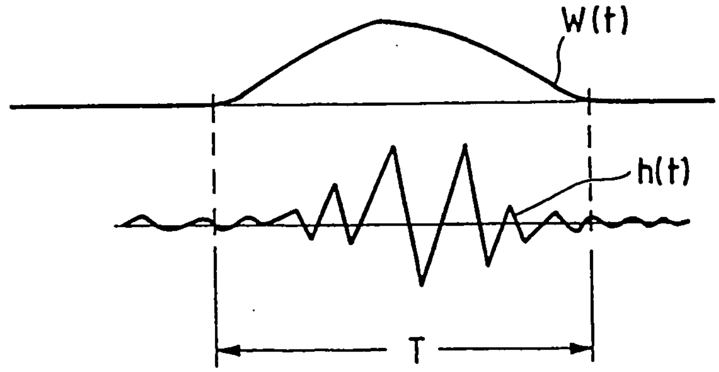
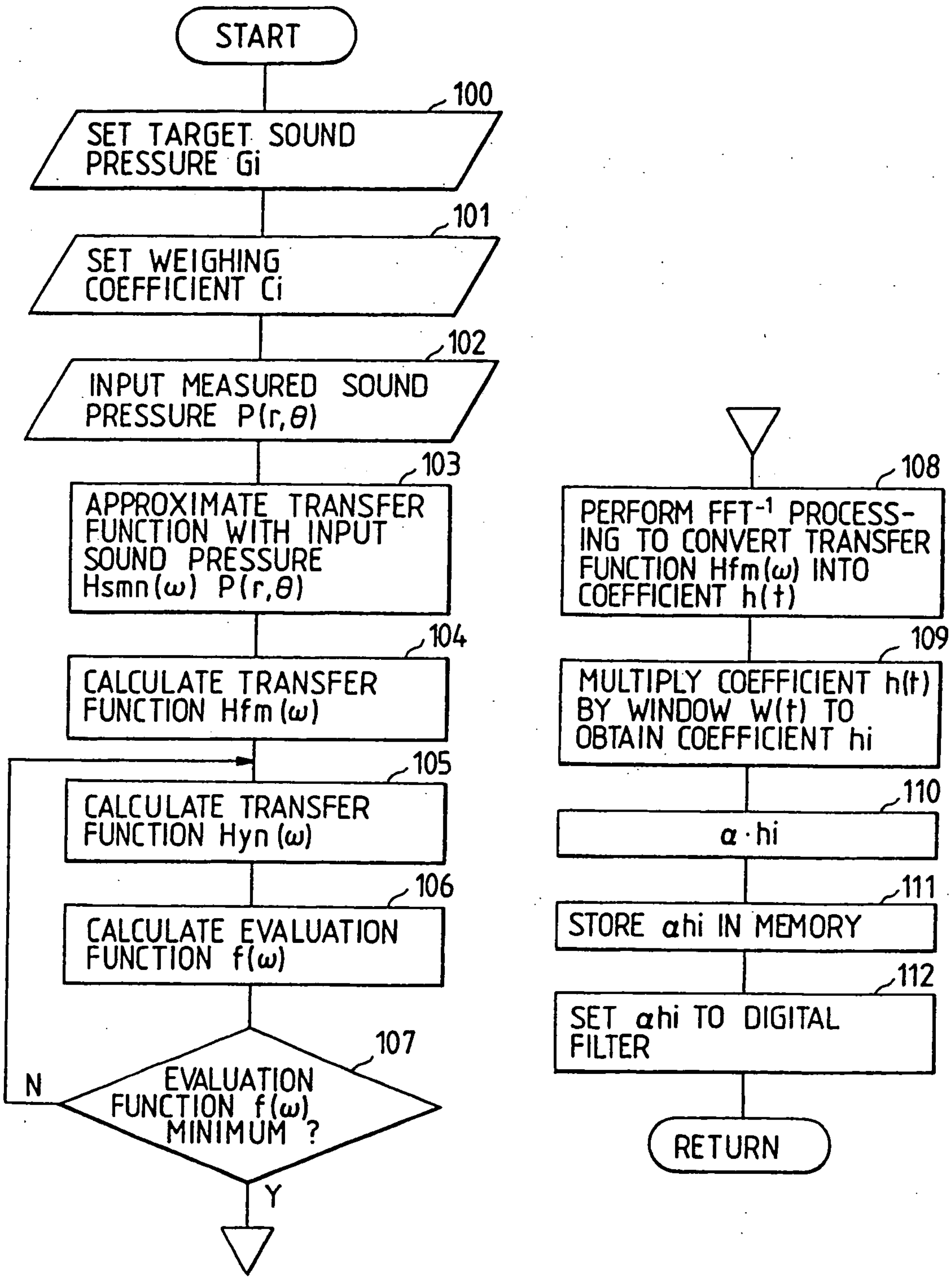

W(t)
h(t)
T

FIG. 3


START
100
SET TARGET SOUND PRESSURE Gi
101
SET WEIGHING COEFFICIENT Ci
102
INPUT MEASURED SOUND PRESSURE P(r,θ)
103
APPROXIMATE TRANSFER FUNCTION WITH INPUT SOUND PRESSURE Hsmn(ω) P(r,θ)
104
CALCULATE TRANSFER FUNCTION Hfm(ω)
105
CALCULATE TRANSFER FUNCTION Hyn(ω)
106
CALCULATE EVALUATION FUNCTION f(ω)
107
EVALUATION FUNCTION f(ω) MINIMUM ?
N
Y
108
PERFORM FFT-1 PROCESSING TO CONVERT TRANSFER FUNCTION Hfm(ω) INTO COEFFICIENT h(t)
109
MULTIPLY COEFFICIENT h(t) BY WINDOW W(t) TO OBTAIN COEFFICIENT hi
110
α·hi
111
STORE αhi IN MEMORY
112
SET αhi TO DIGITAL FILTER
RETURN

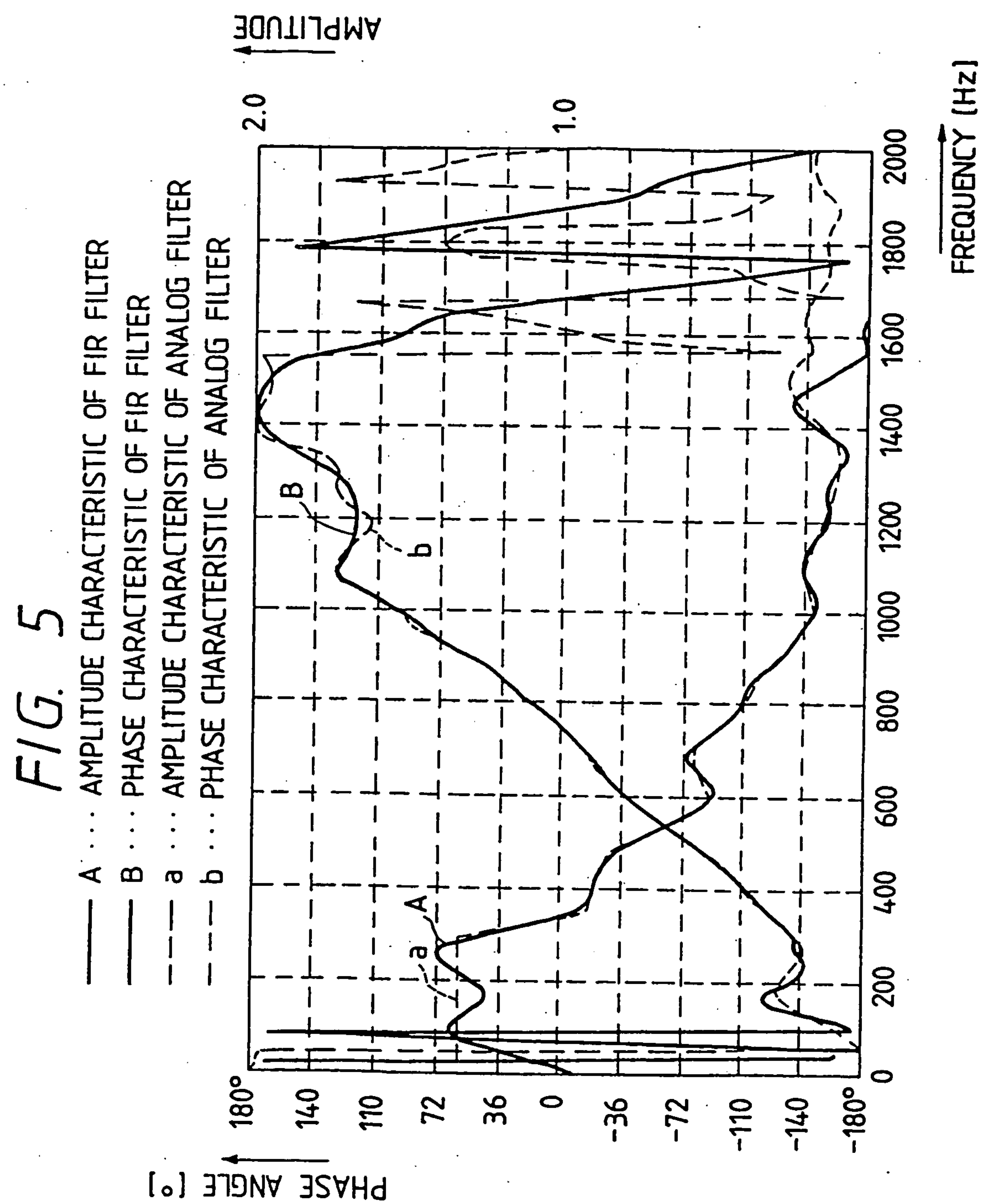

A .... AMPLITUDE CHARACTERISTIC OF FIR FILTER
B .... PHASE CHARACTERISTIC OF FIR FILTER
a .... AMPLITUDE CHARACTERISTIC OF ANALOG FILTER
b .... PHASE CHARACTERISTIC OF ANALOG FILTER
AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
A
a
B
b

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

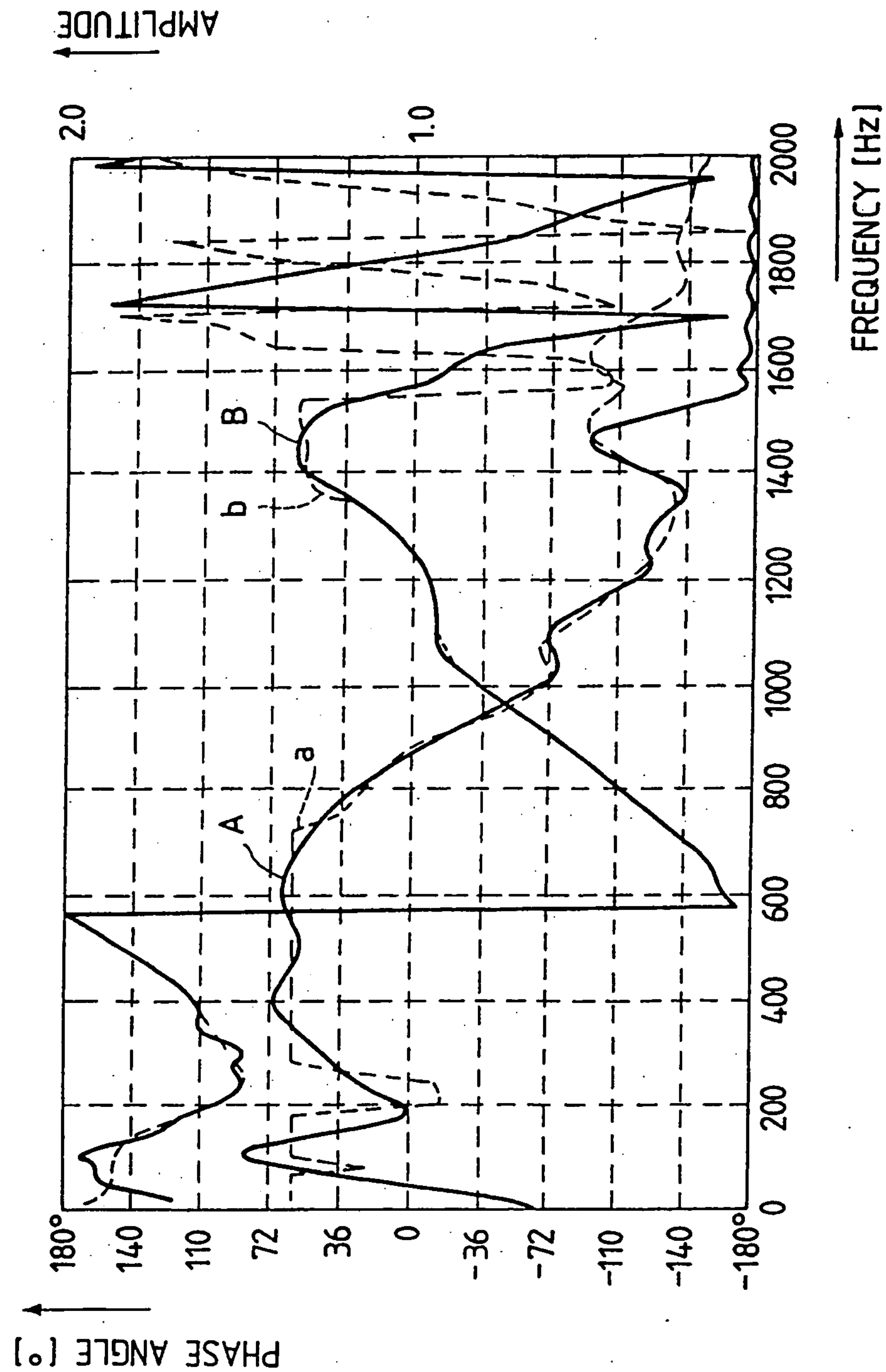

AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
FREQUENCY [Hz]
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
A
a
B
b

FIG. 7

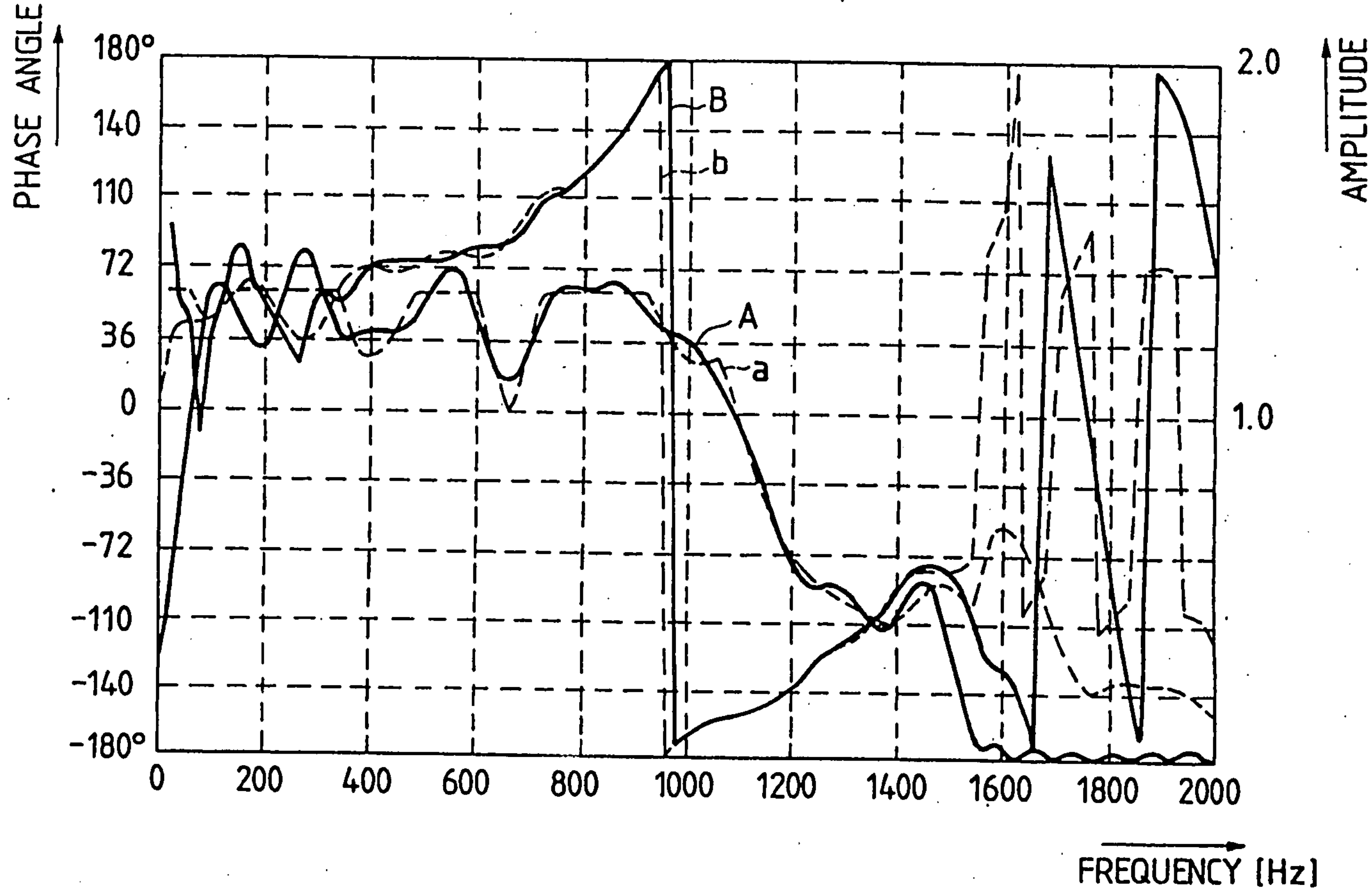

PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
A
a
B
b

FIG. 8

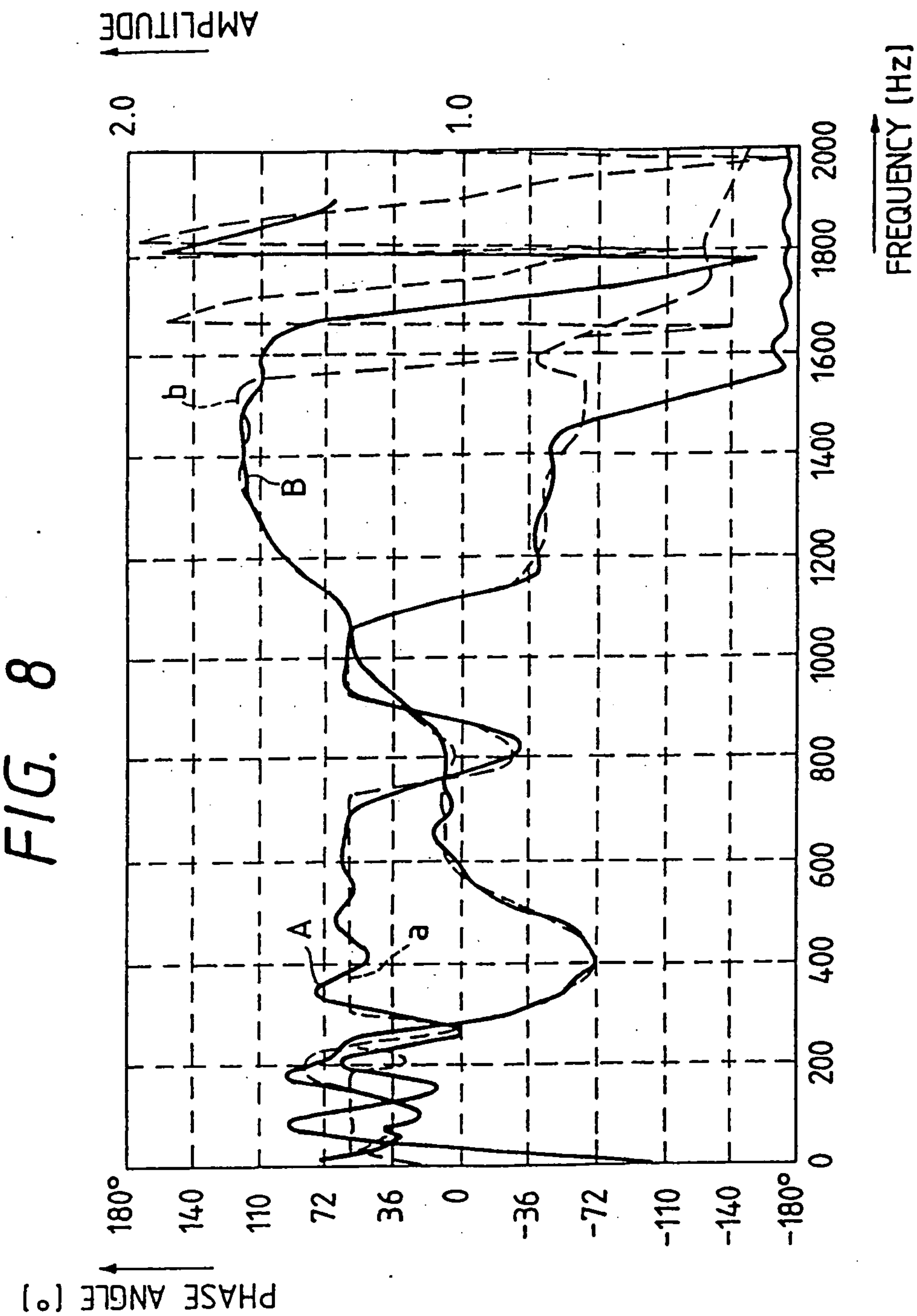

AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
A
a
B
b

FIG. 9

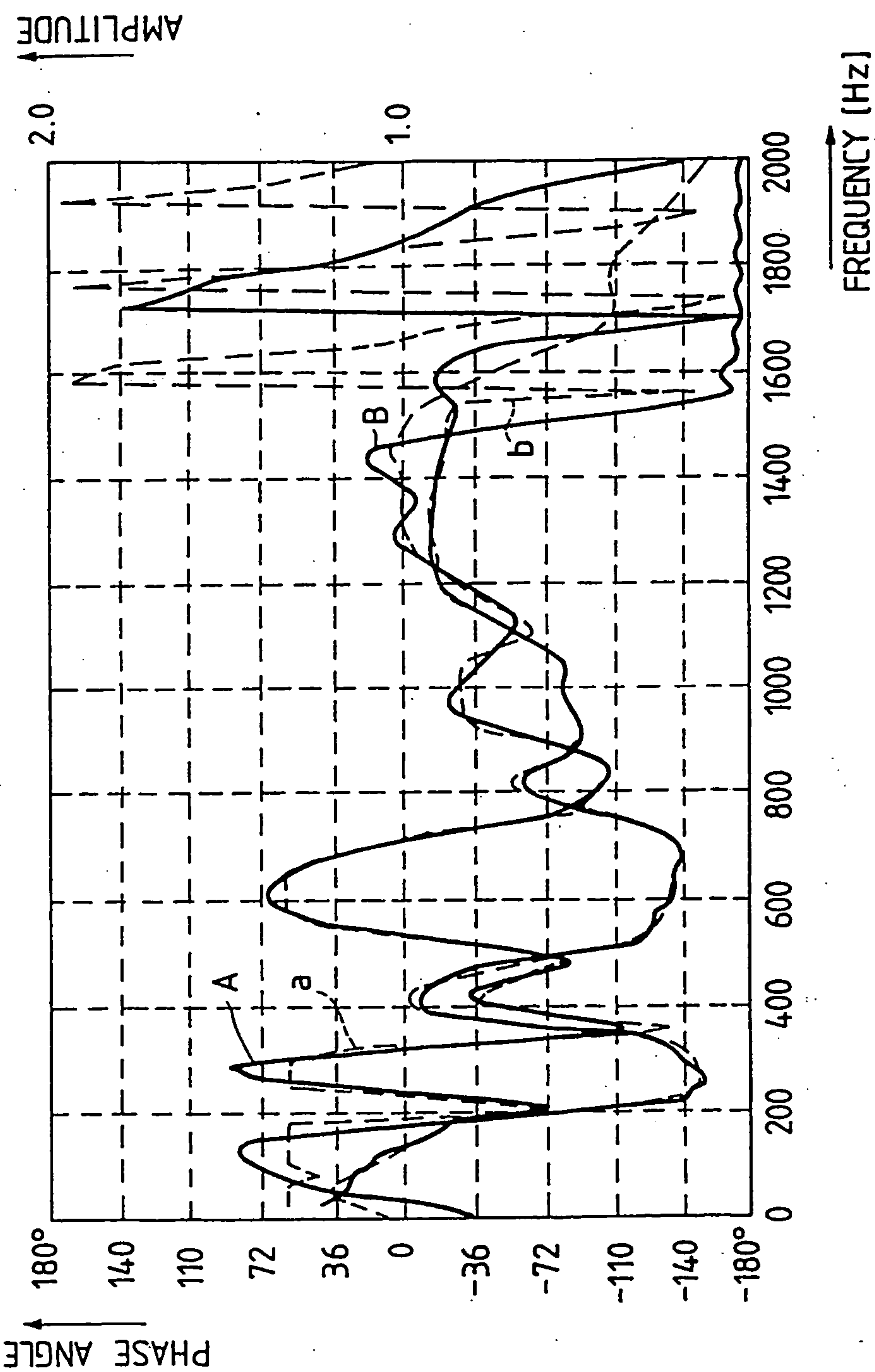

AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
FREQUENCY [Hz]
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
A
a
B
b

FIG. 10

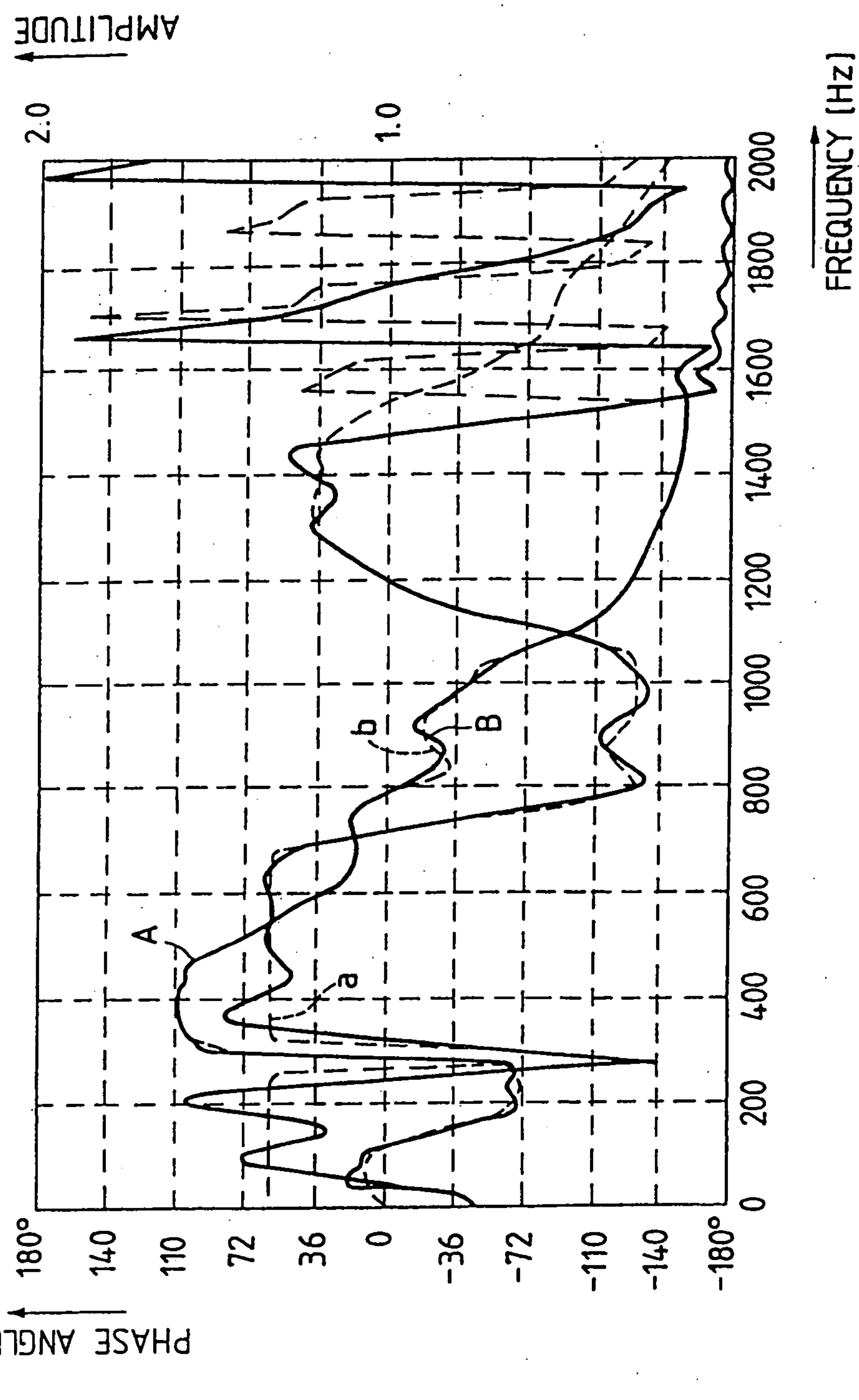

AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
A
a
b
B

FIG. 11

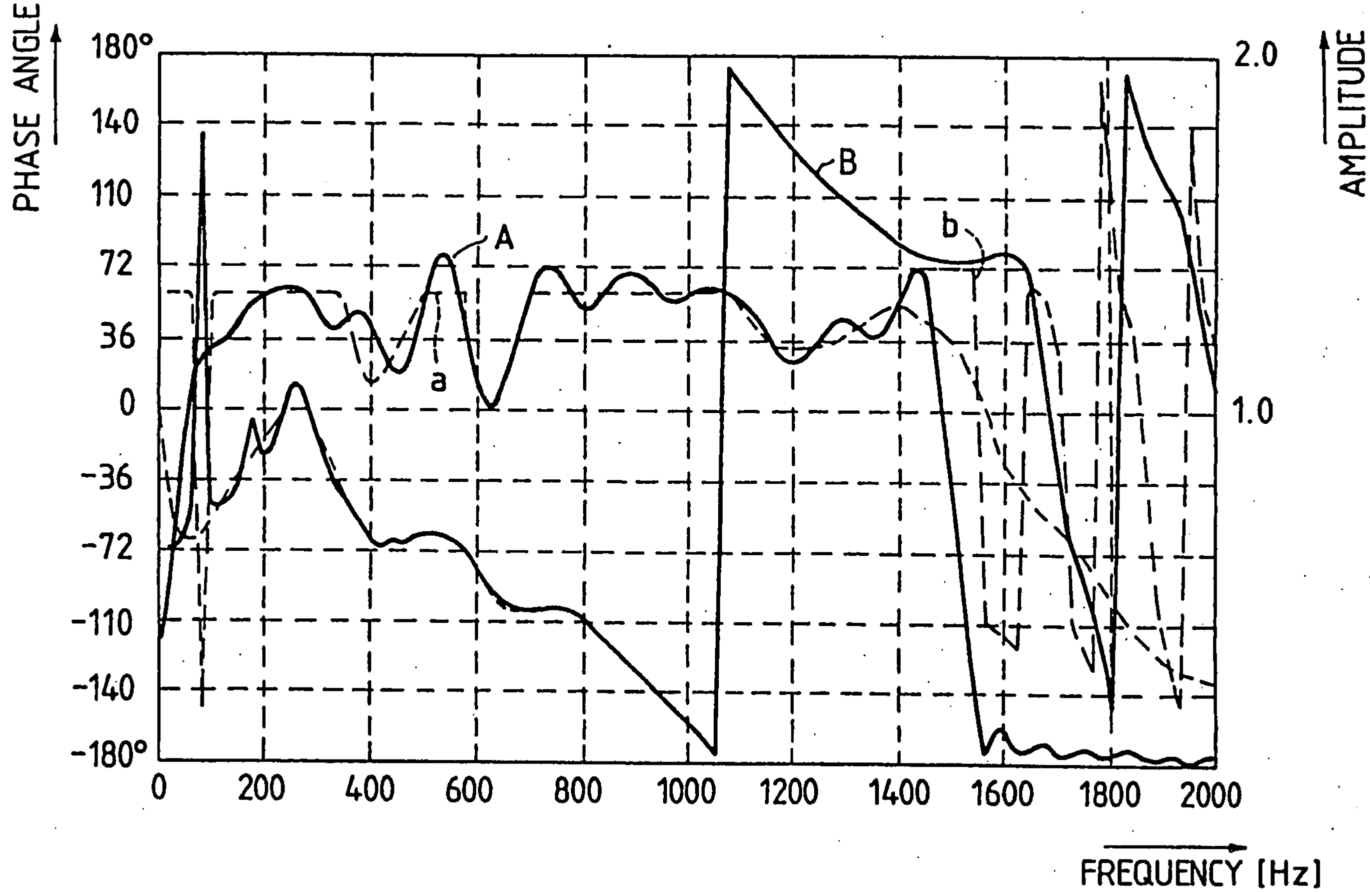

PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
A
a
B
b

FIG. 12

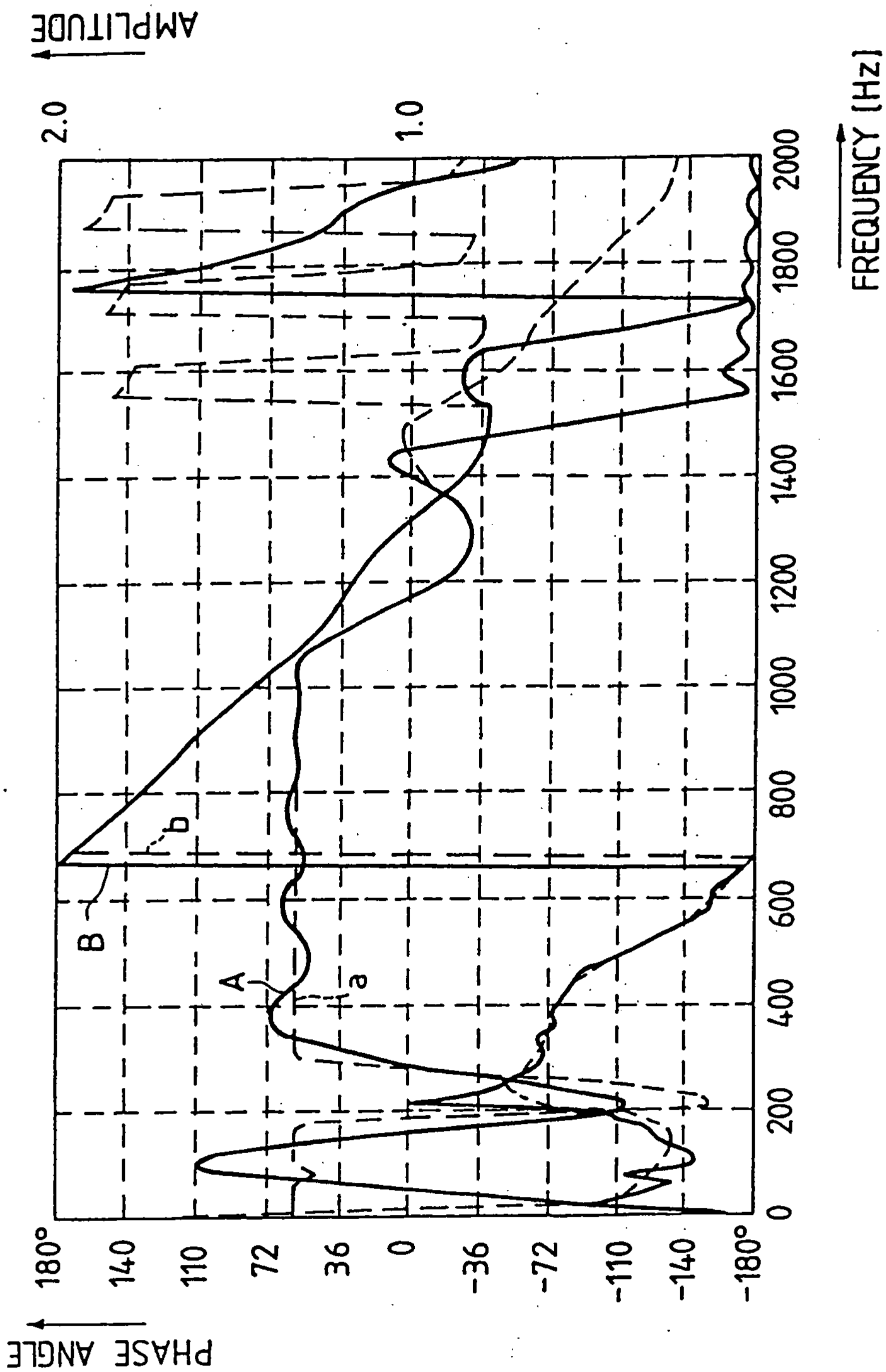

AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
A
B
a
b

FIG. 13

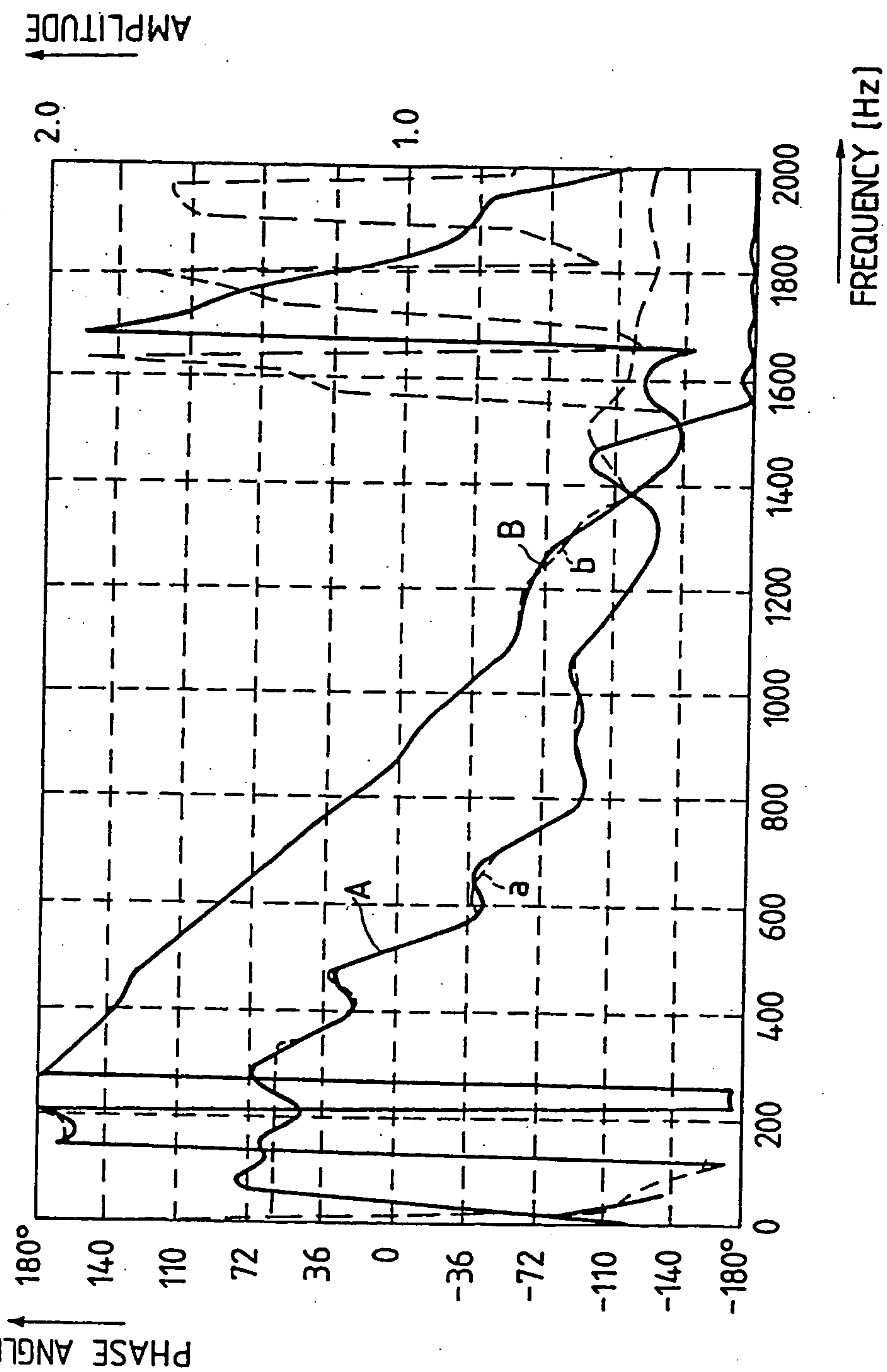

AMPLITUDE
2.0
1.0
PHASE ANGLE [°]
180°
140
110
72
36
0
-36
-72
-110
-140
-180°
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]
A
a
B
b

FIG. 14

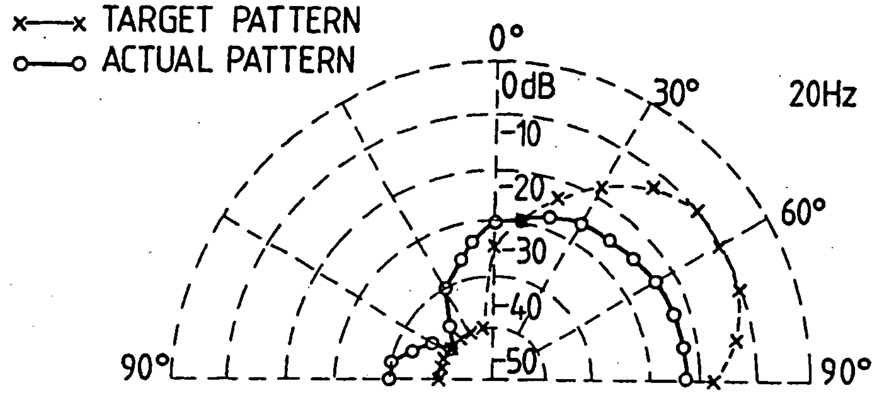


FIG. 15

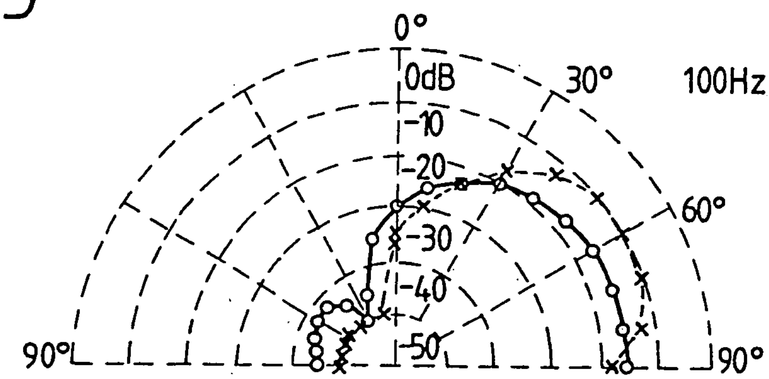


FIG. 16

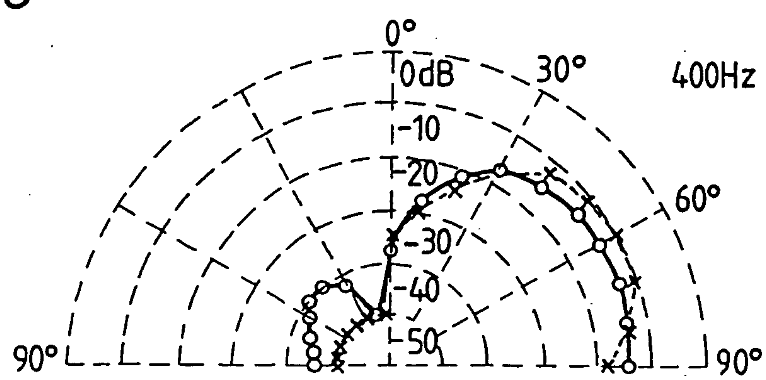


FIG. 17

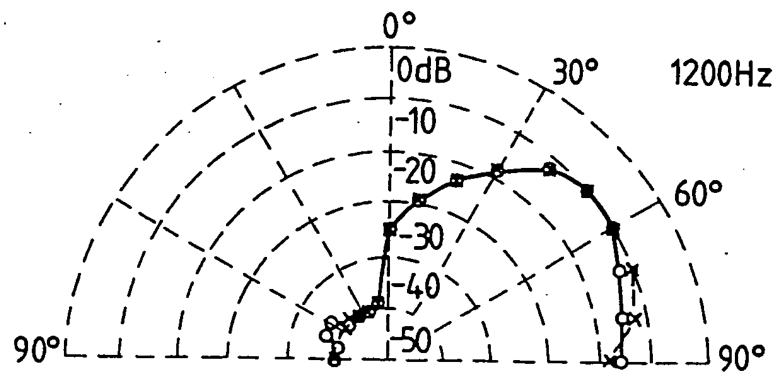

0°
0dB
-10
-20
-30
-40
-50
30°
60°
90°
90°
1200Hz

FIG. 18

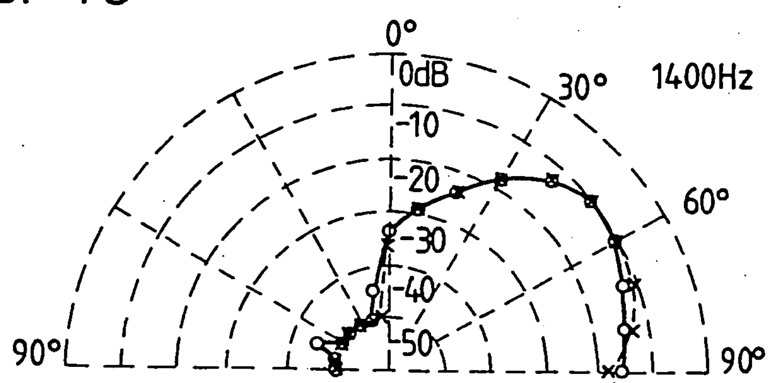

0°
0dB
-10
-20
-30
-40
-50
30°
60°
90°
90°
1400Hz

FIG. 19(a)

PLAN PATTERN

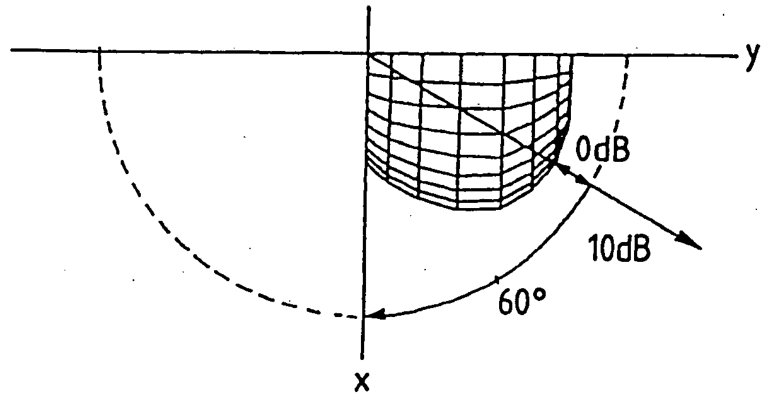


FIG. 19(b)

FRONT PATTERN

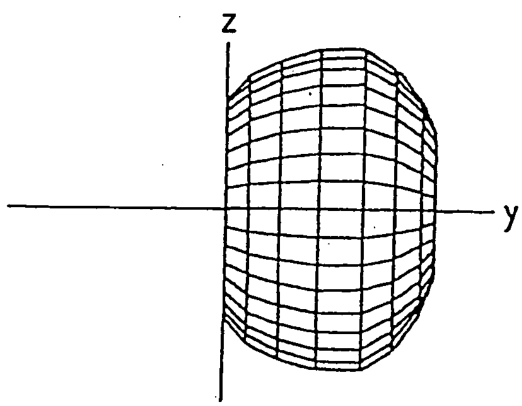


FIG. 19(c)

SIDE PATTERN

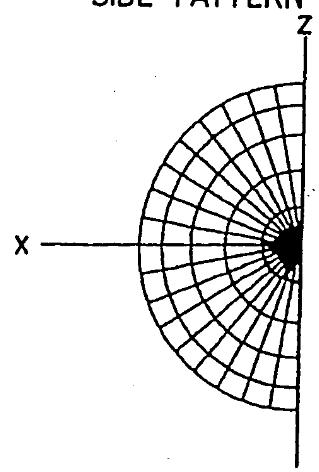


FIG. 19(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

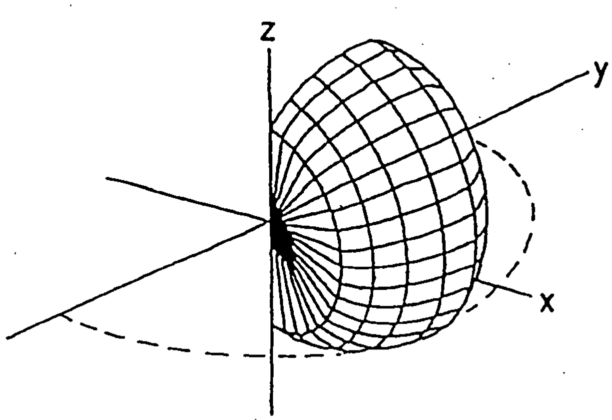


FIG. 20(a)

PLAN PATTERN

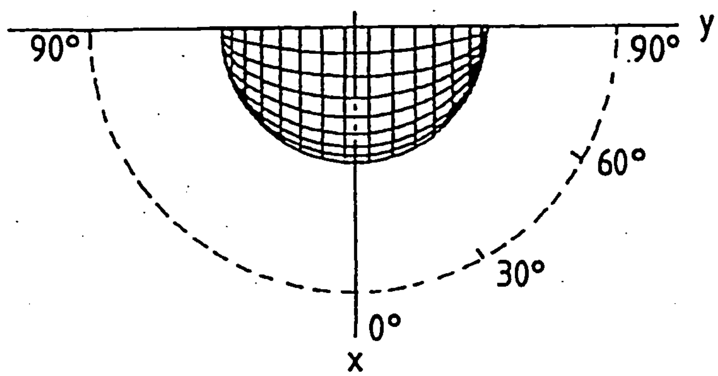


FIG. 20(b)

FRONT PATTERN

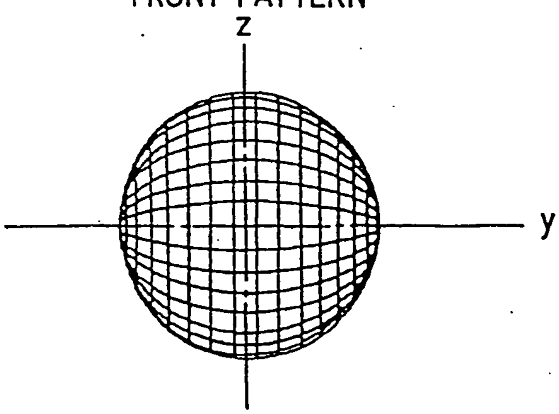


FIG. 20(c)

SIDE PATTERN

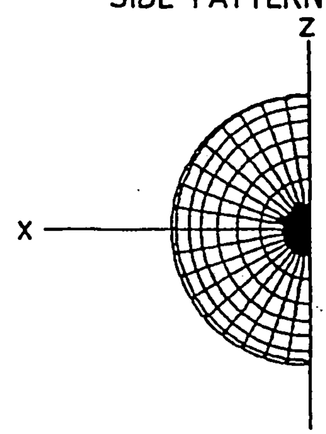


FIG. 20(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

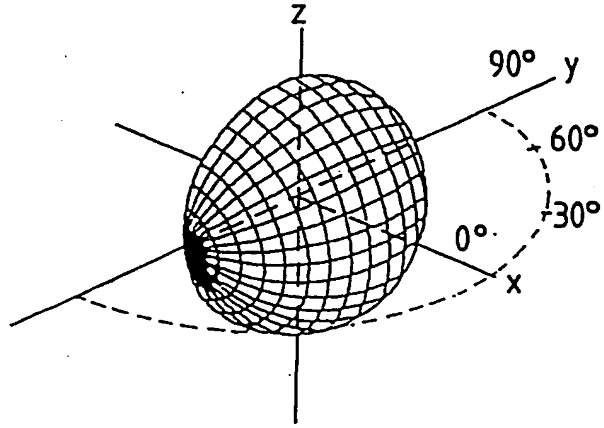


FIG. 21(a)

PLAN PATTERN

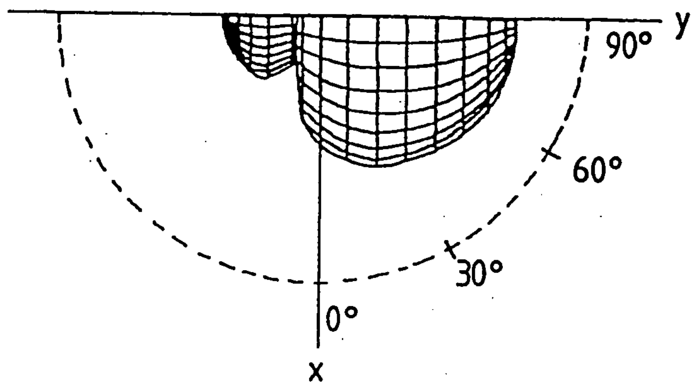


FIG. 21(b)

FRONT PATTERN

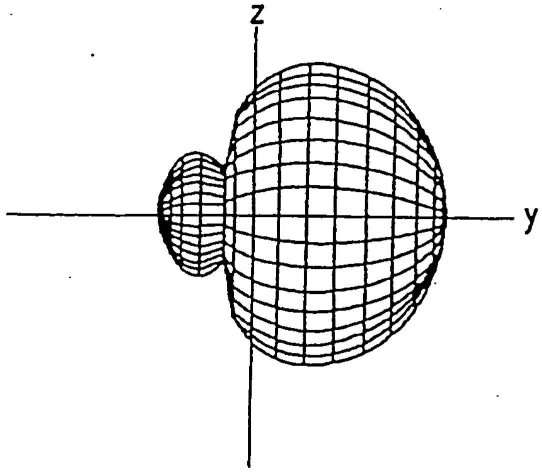


FIG. 21(c)

SIDE PATTERN

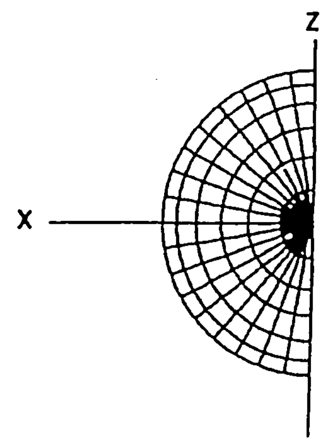


FIG. 21(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

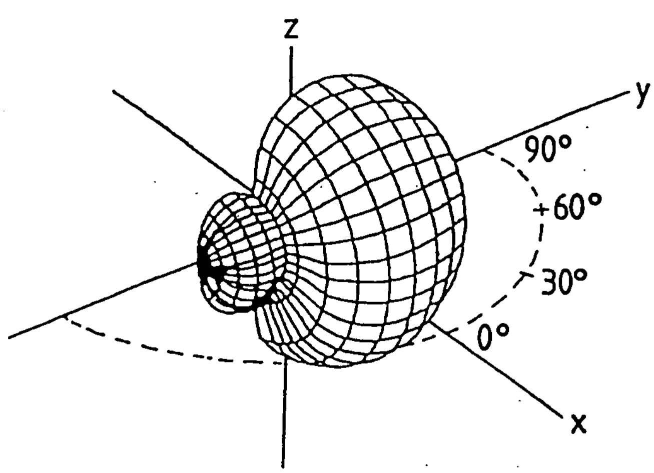


FIG. 22(a)

PLAN PATTERN

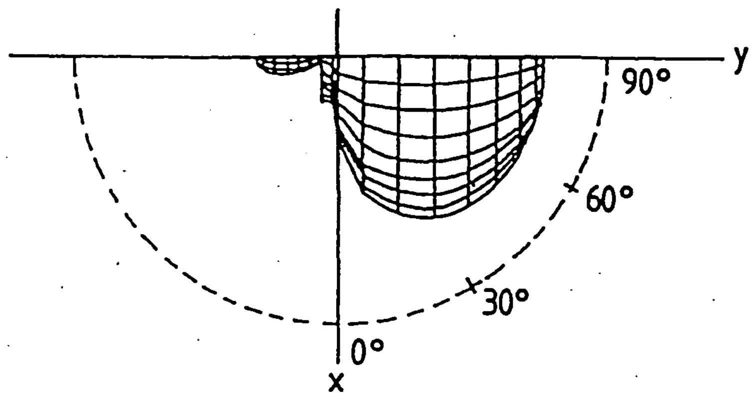


FIG. 22(b)

FRONT PATTERN

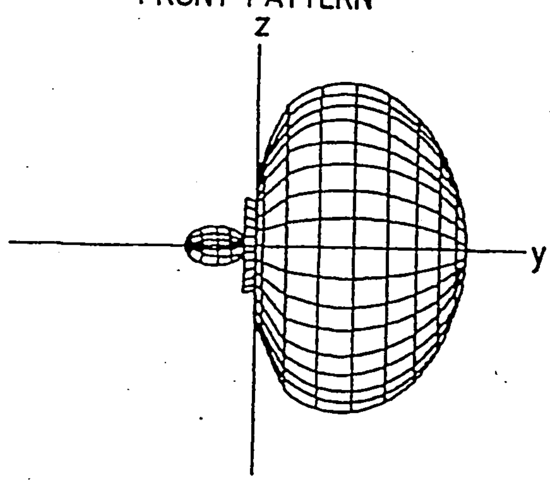


FIG. 22(c)

SIDE PATTERN

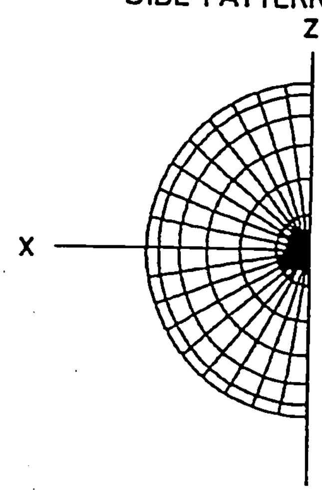


FIG. 22(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

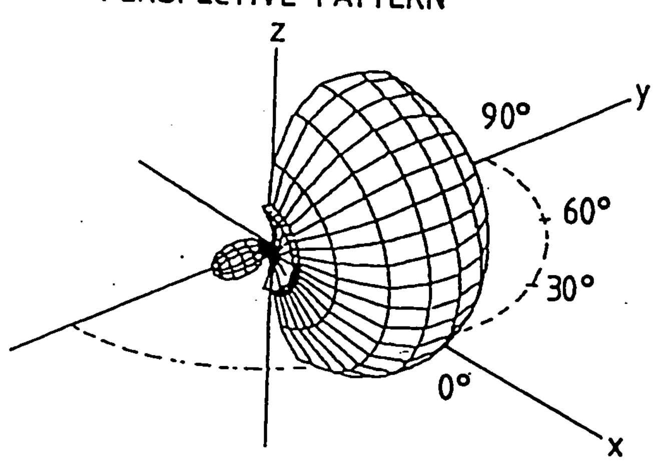


FIG. 23(a)

PLAN PATTERN

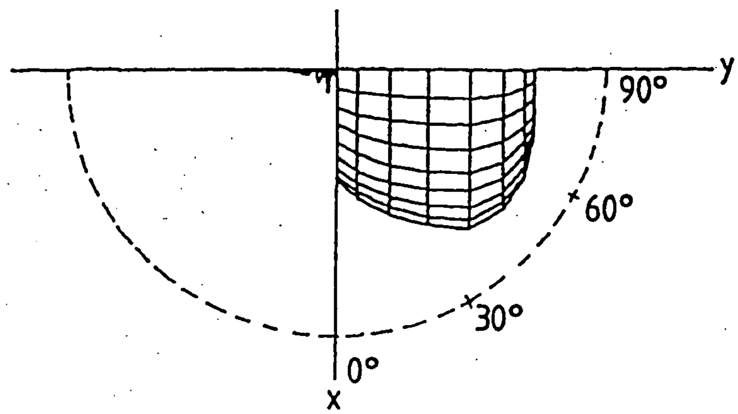


FIG. 23(b)

FRONT PATTERN

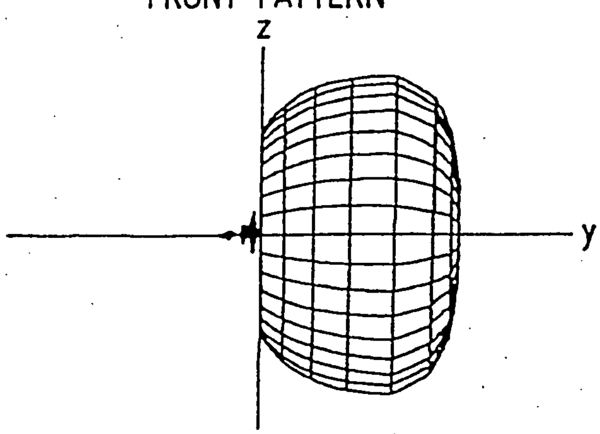


FIG. 23(c)

SIDE PATTERN

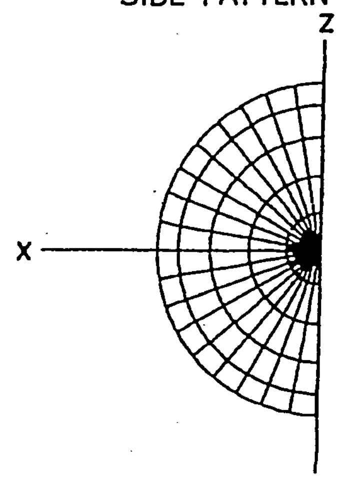


FIG. 23(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

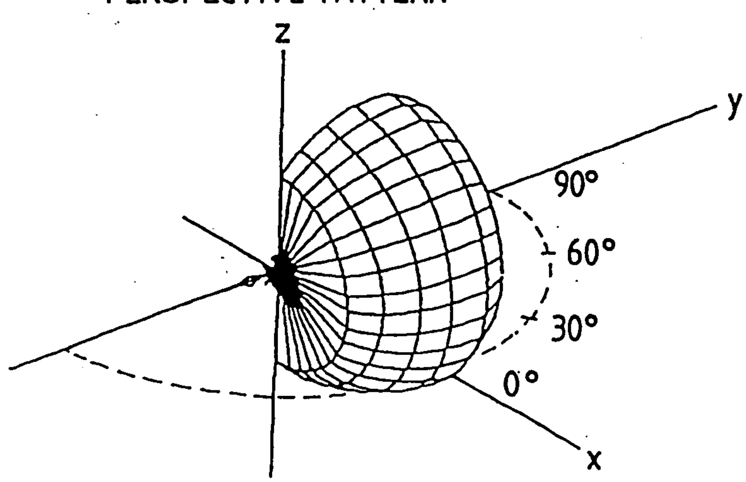


FIG. 24(a)

PLAN PATTERN

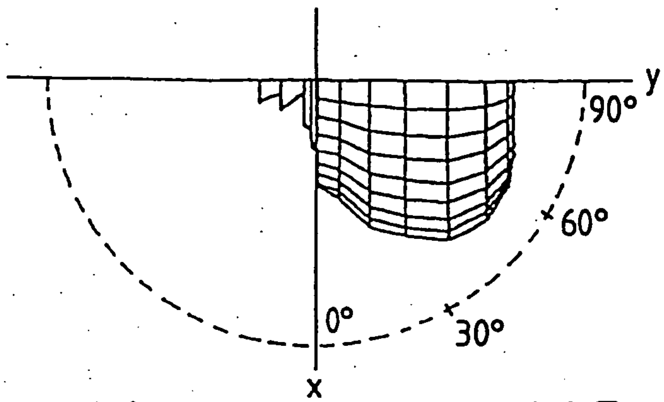


FIG. 24(b)

FRONT PATTERN

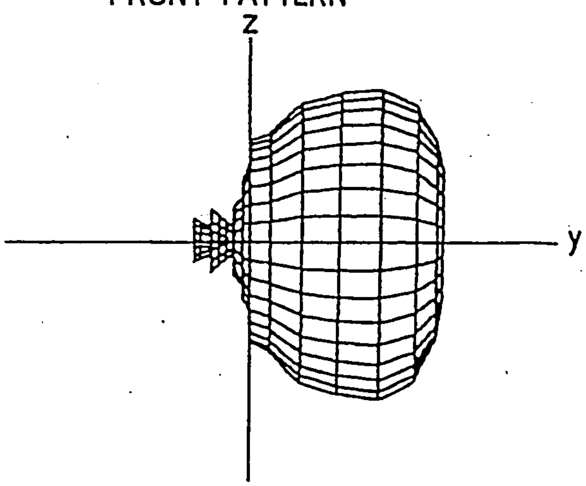


FIG. 24(c)

SIDE PATTERN

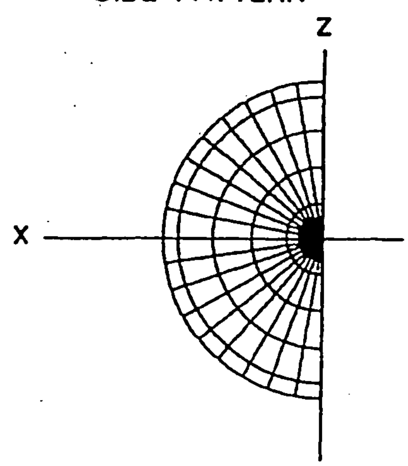


FIG. 24(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

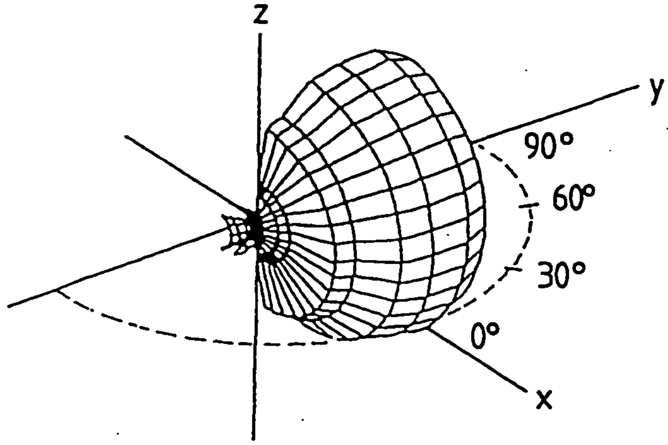


FIG. 25

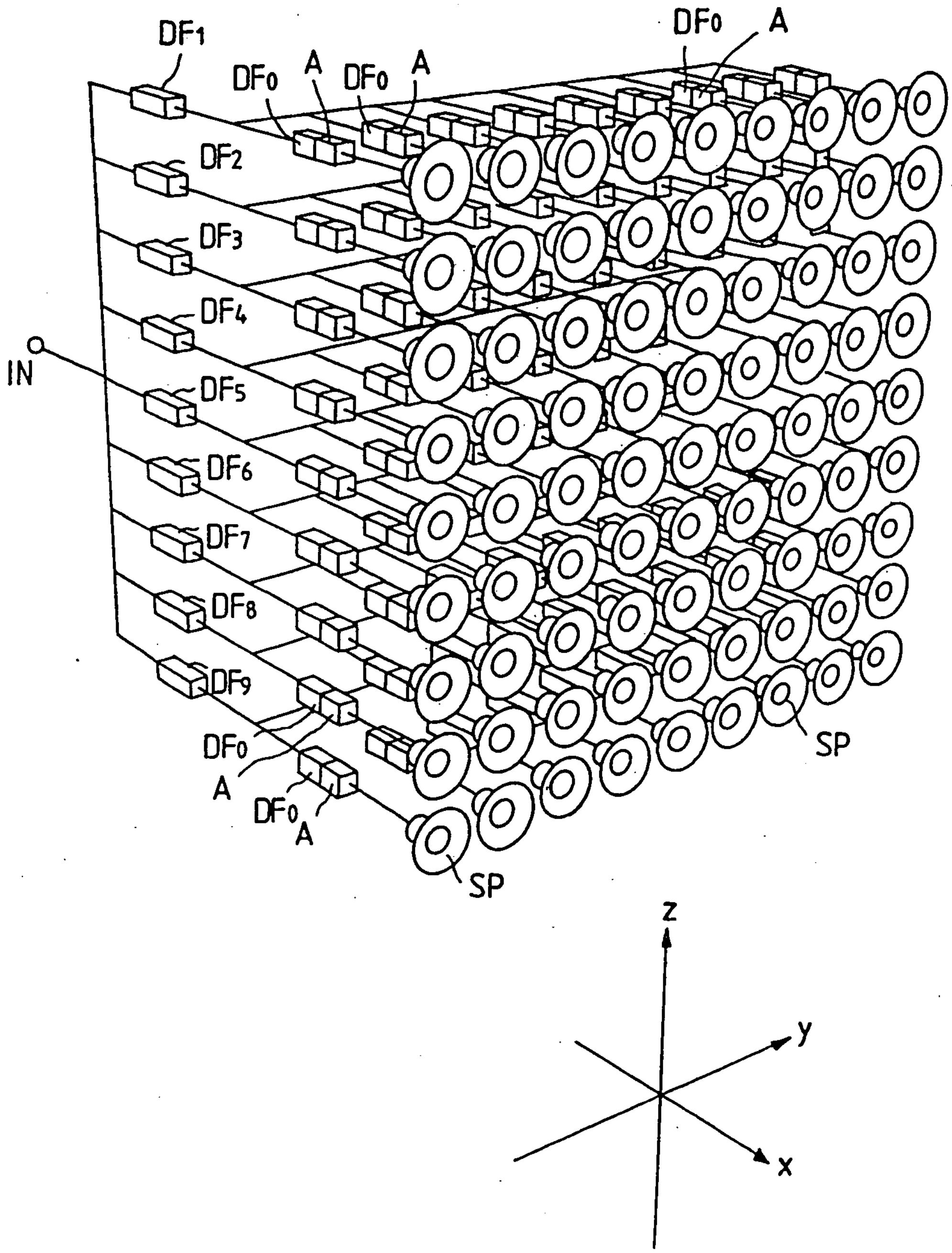

DF1
DF0
A
DF0
A
DF0
A
DF2
DF3
DF4
IN
DF5
DF6
DF7
DF8
DF9
DF0
A
DF0
A
SP
SP
z
y
x

FIG. 26(a)

PLAN PATTERN

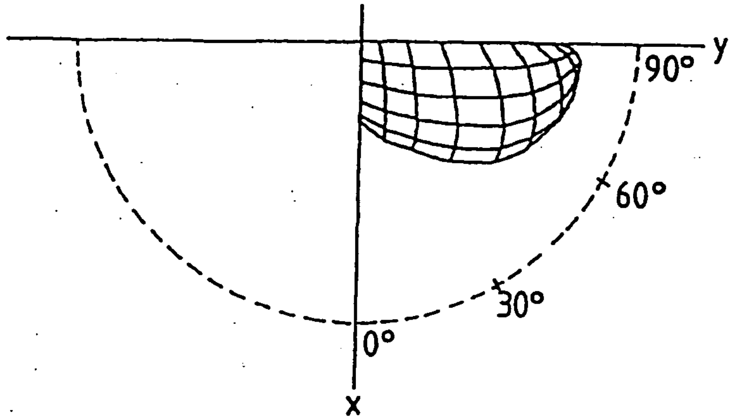


FIG. 26(b)

FRONT PATTERN

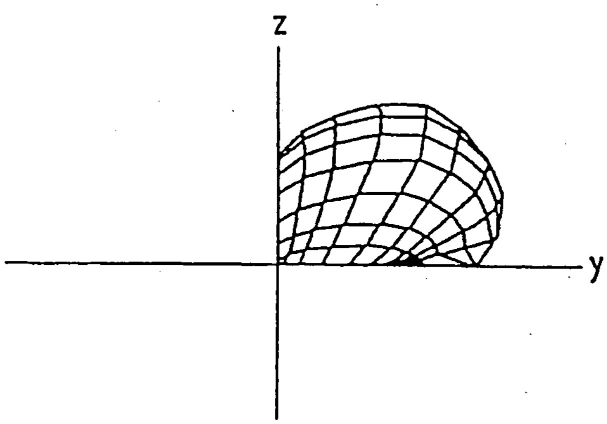


FIG. 26(c)

SIDE PATTERN

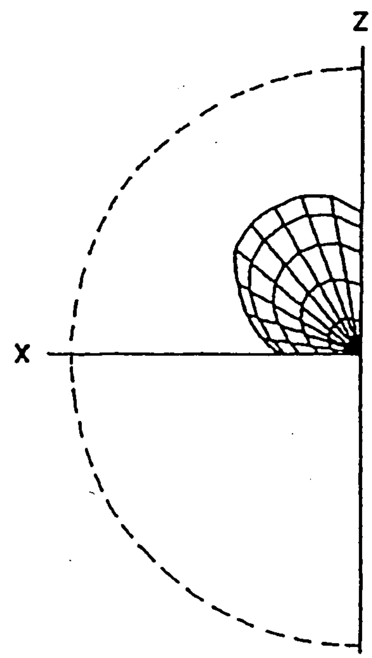


FIG. 26(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

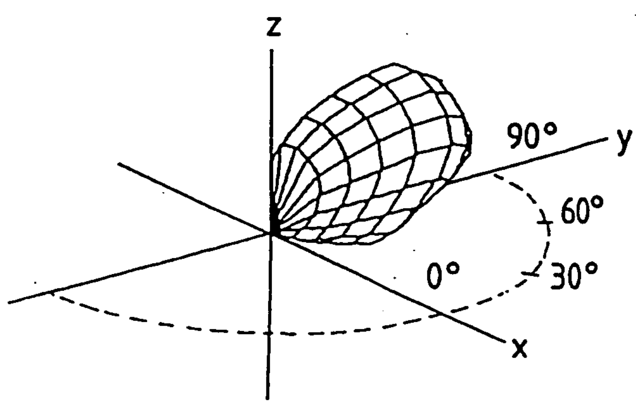


FIG. 27(a)

PLAN PATTERN

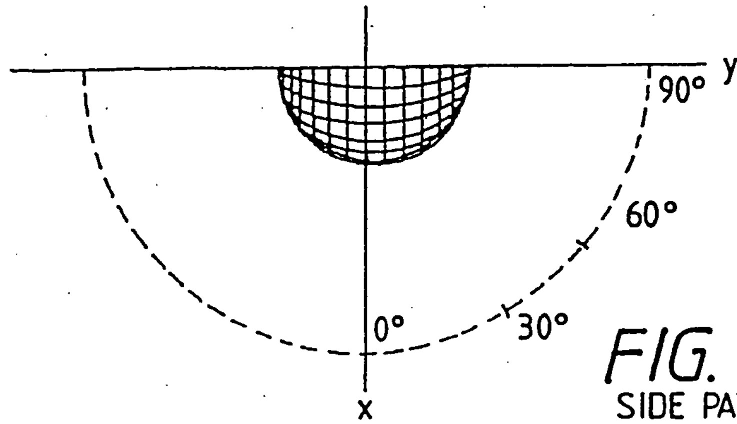


FIG. 27(c)

SIDE PATTERN

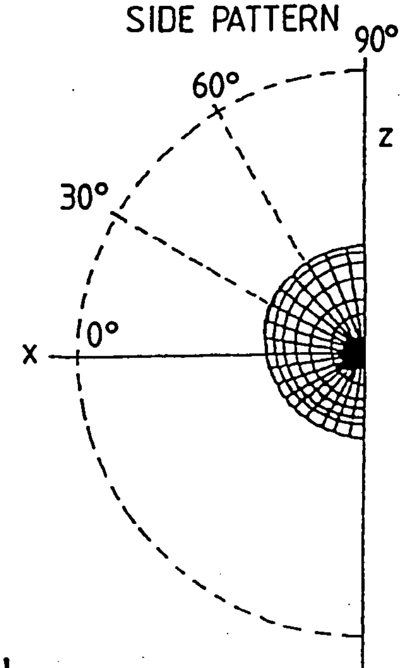


FIG. 27(b)

FRONT PATTERN

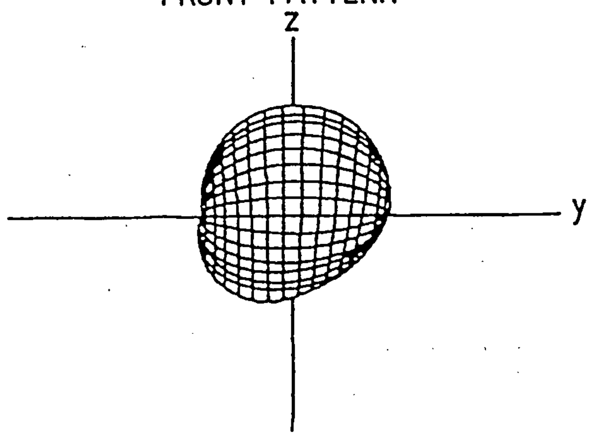


FIG. 27(d)

PERSPECTIVE PETTERN

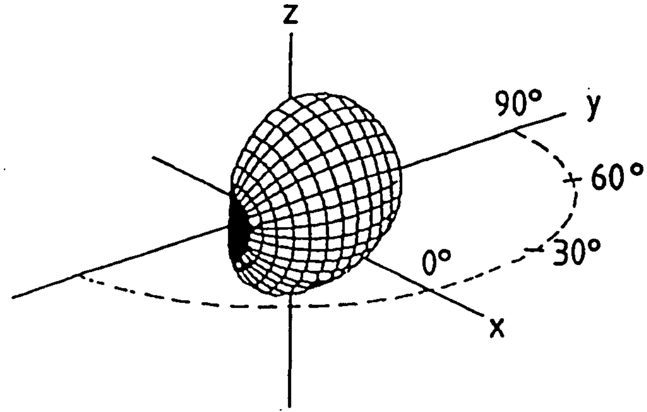


FIG. 28(a)

PLAN PATTERN

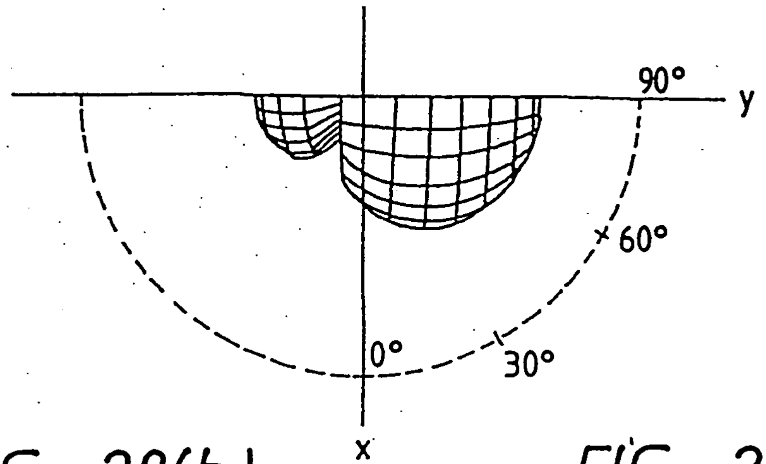


FIG. 28(b)

FRONT PATTERN

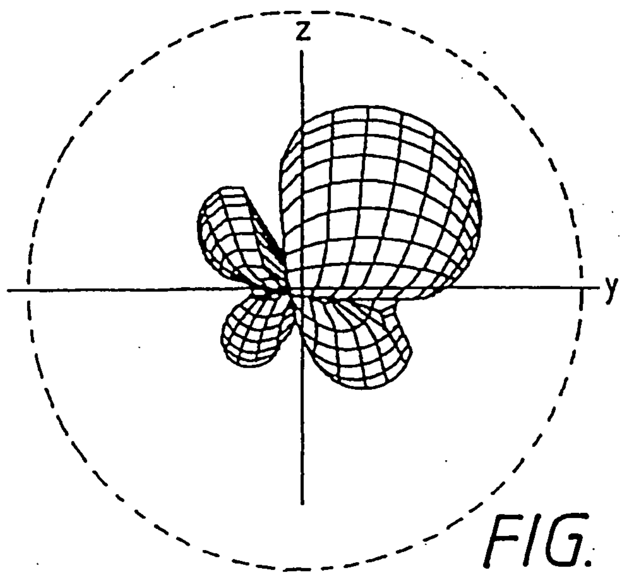


FIG. 28(c)

SIDE PATTERN

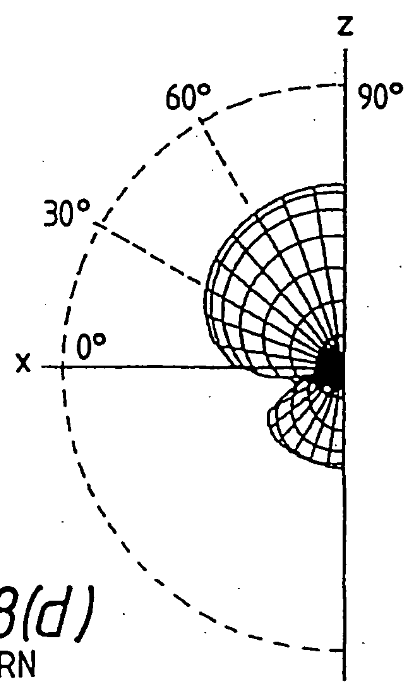


FIG. 28(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

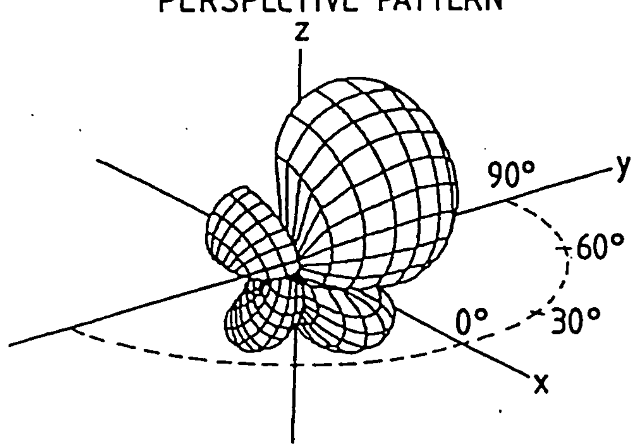


FIG. 29(a)

PLAN PATTERN

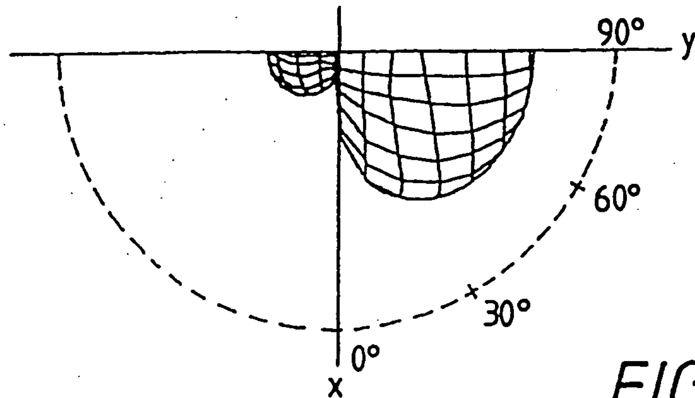


FIG. 29(b)

FRONT PATTERN

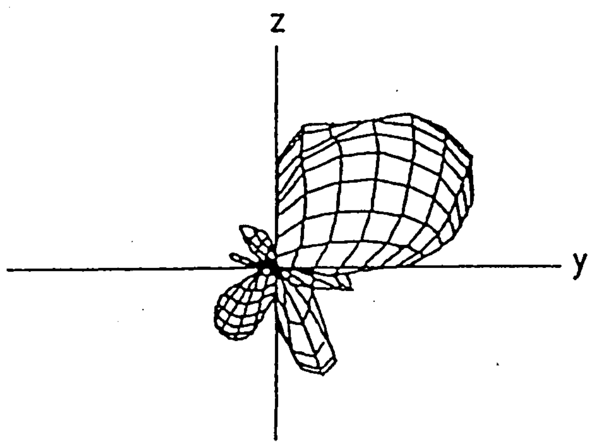


FIG. 29(c)

SIDE PATTERN

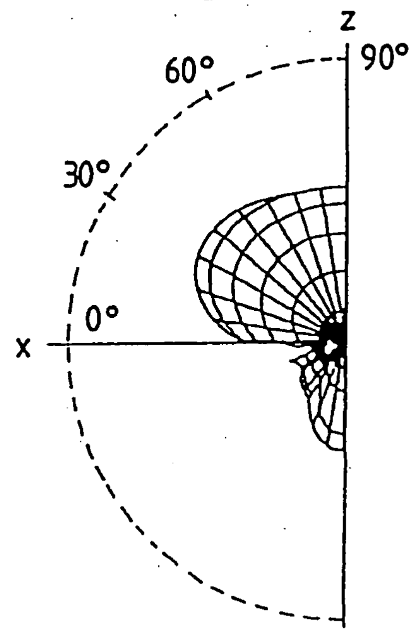


FIG. 29(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

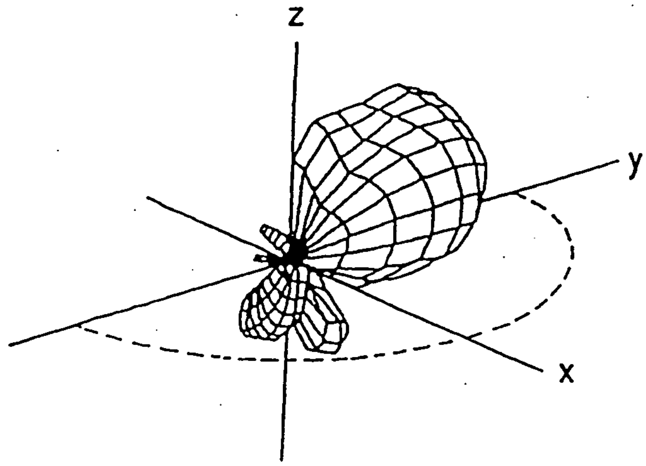


FIG. 30(a)

PLAN PATTERN

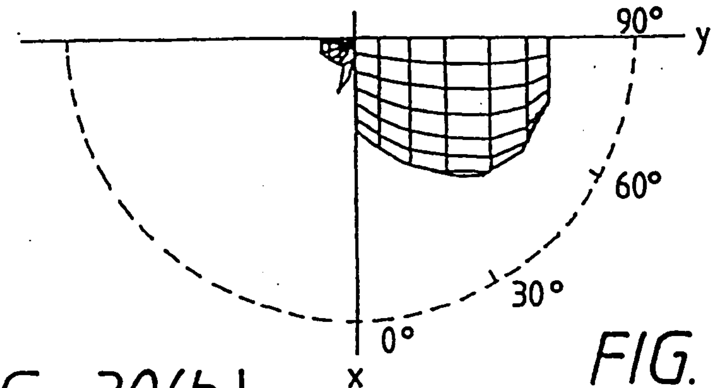


FIG. 30(b)

FRONT PATTERN

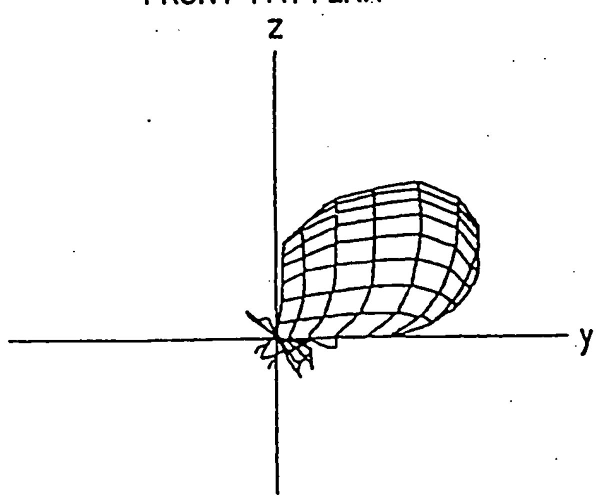


FIG. 30(c)

SIDE PATTERN

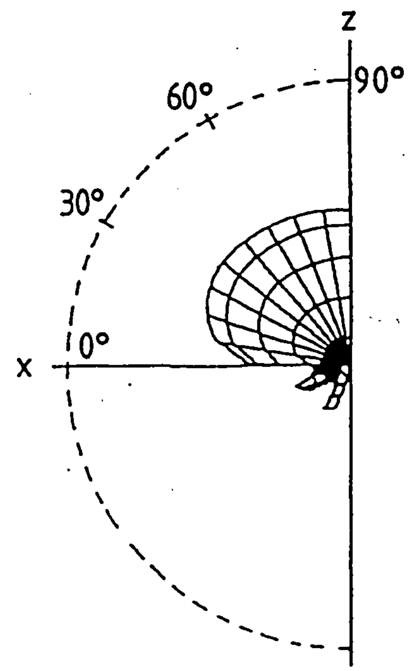


FIG. 30(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

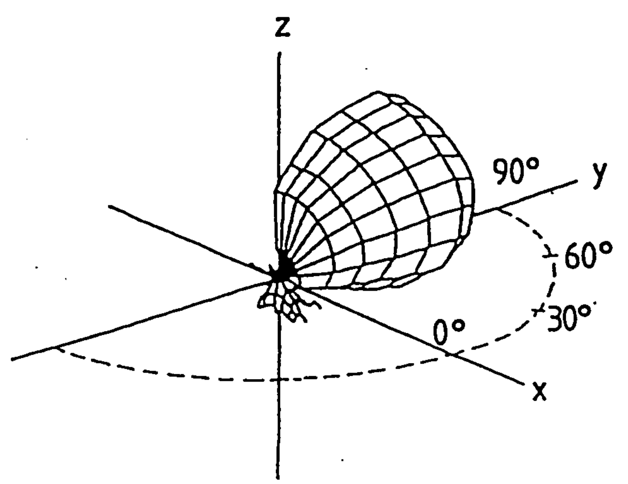


FIG. 31(a)

PLAN PATTERN

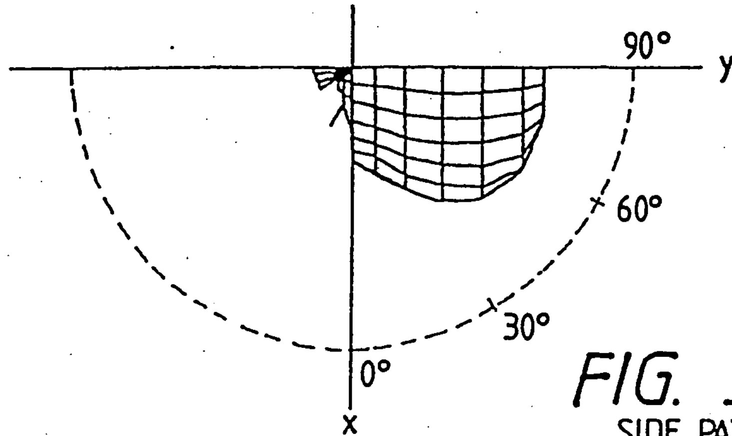


FIG. 31(b)

FRONT PATTERN

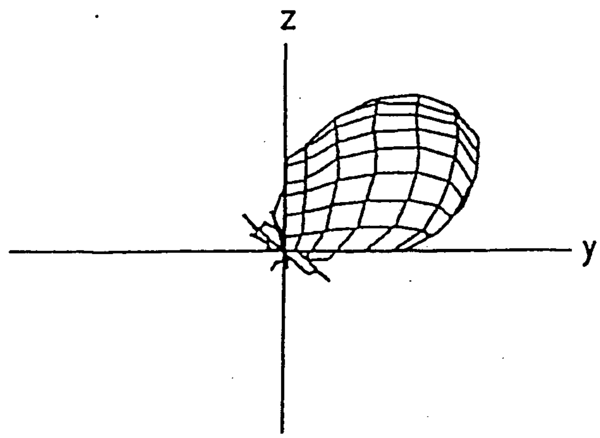


FIG. 31(c)

SIDE PATTERN

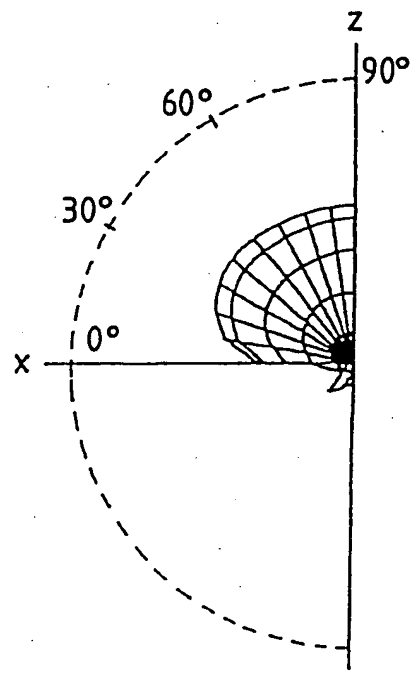


FIG. 31(d)

PERSPECTIVE PATTERN

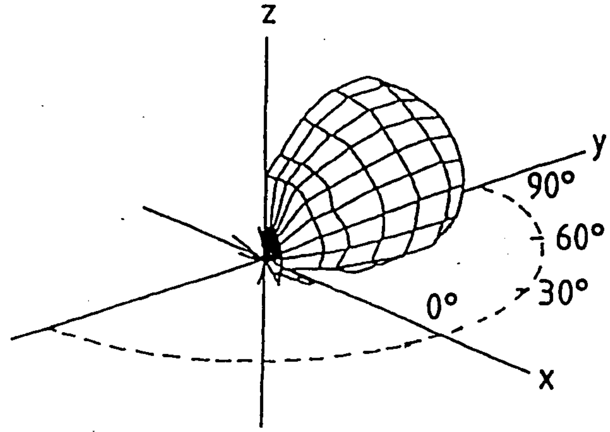


FIG. 32

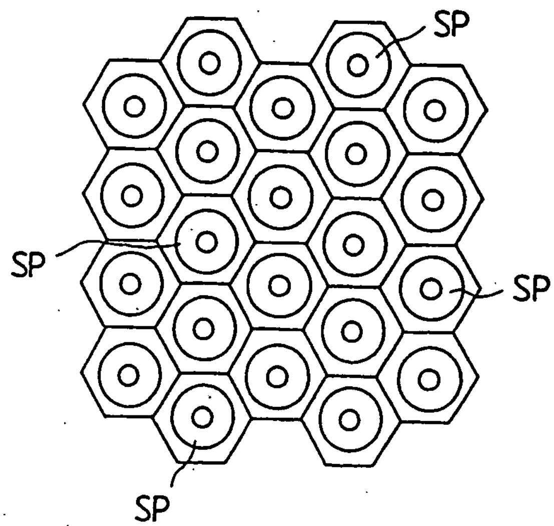


FIG. 33

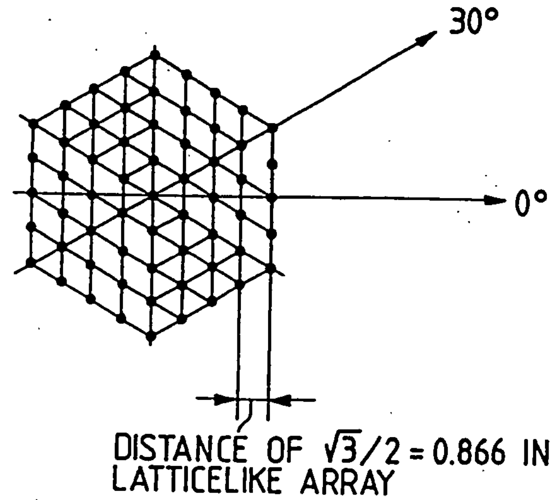


FIG. 34

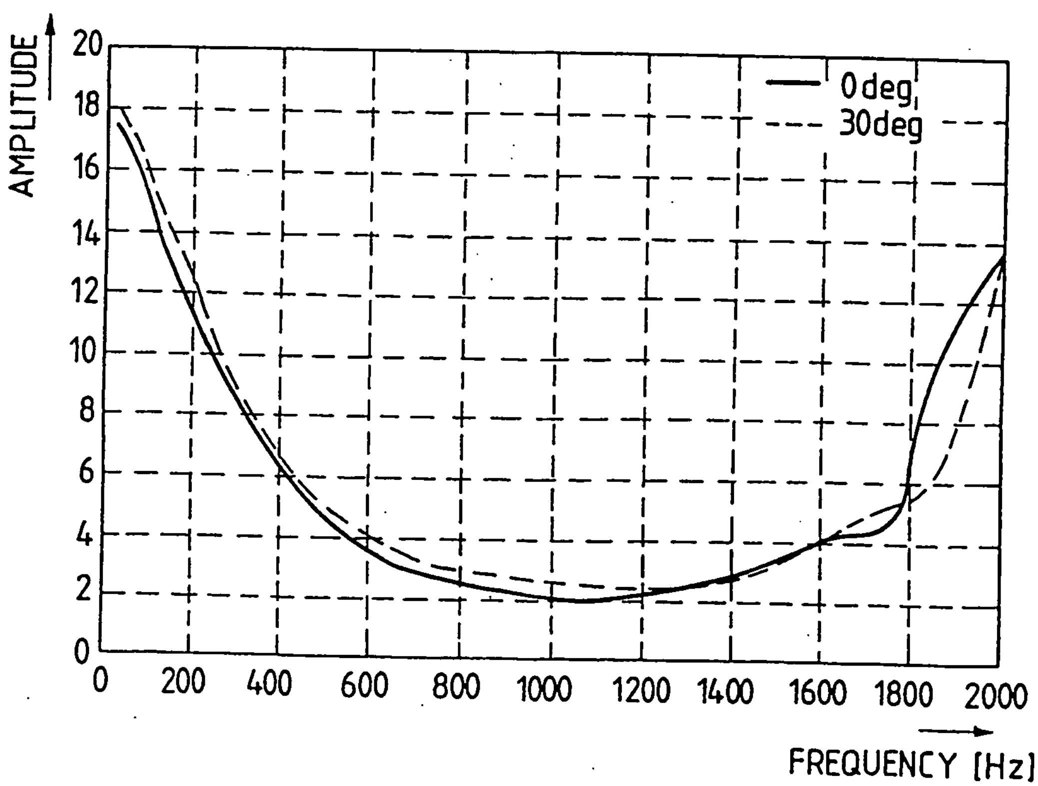


FIG. 35

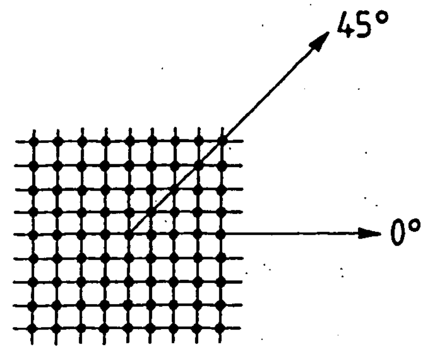
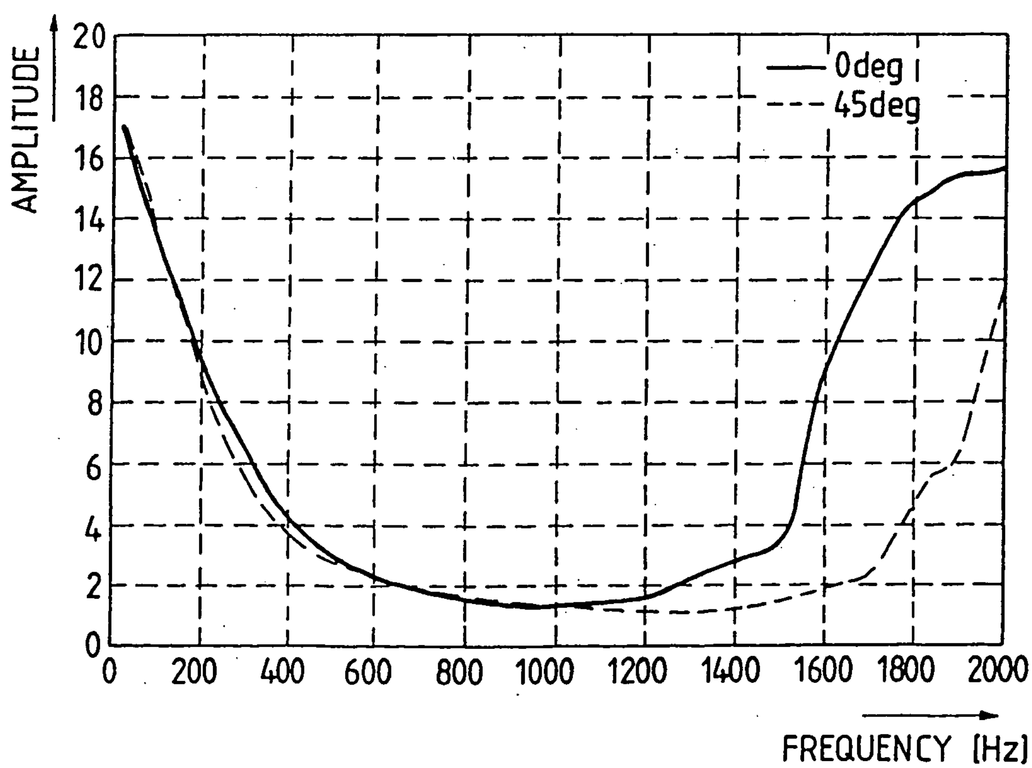

45°
0°

FIG. 36


AMPLITUDE
0deg
45deg
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
1600
1800
2000
FREQUENCY [Hz]

??r?4?5

SPEAKER SYSTEM AND METHOD OF CONTROLLING DIRECTIVITY THEREOF

The present invention relates to a speaker system and a method of controlling a speaker system's directivity and, more particularly, to a system and method of controlling the directivity of a linearly or two-dimensionally arranged speaker system.

Directivity is one of the characteristics used to evaluate the performance of a speaker. Directivity is a property that the magnitude of a sound pressure differs depending on direction. It cannot indiscriminately be said that a wider directivity is better in all applications. There are various directivity patterns for various applications of a speaker, i.e., the range of service of the speaker. For example, for audio use, a wide directivity is preferred, while for loudspeaking applications, a narrow directivity is called for so that voice is radiated only in a predetermined direction to prevent howling, etc.

On the other hand, factors determining the directivity of a speaker include: for a single speaker unit, the structure of a the speaker unit itself, whether it is a cone type or a horn type; and for a cone type speaker, the depth of a cone forming its

diaphragm. Further, there is a type of sound that is radiated only in a predetermined direction by a linearly arranged speaker (the so-called "Tonesaulen type") using a plurality of speaker units. At any rate, the directivity of a speaker is determined by the physical structure or arrangement of the speaker unit itself. However, not only does it take time and labor to fabricate a speaker that meets a directivity requirement, but also restrictions are often imposed on the outside dimensions, etc. To overcome this problem, a speaker system that controls its directivity electrically using digital filters has been developed (see Japanese Patent Unexamined Publication No. Hei. 2-239798).

However, the above speaker system is intended to obtain consistent directivity covering a wide range from low to high frequencies, and in the literature there is no indication of any specific control method of obtaining directivity in a desired direction.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide a speaker system and a method of controlling its directivity, which can arbitrarily and variably control not only two-dimensional directivity

but also three-dimensional directivity by means of electric signal processing.

A first embodiment of the invention is applied to a speaker system comprising: a common input terminal for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated; a plurality of speaker units which are linearly arranged; and a plurality of digital filters which are connected by insertion between the common input terminal and the speaker units, respectively, each of the plurality of digital filters having a filter coefficient being set so as to correspond to each of the speaker units to be connected thereto, the filter coefficient being determined by a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern into which the audio signal is acoustically radiated by the plurality of speaker units.

A second embodiment of the invention is applied to a speaker system comprising: a common input terminal for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated; a plurality of speaker units which are arranged on a plane in matrix form; and a plurality of digital filters which are connected by insertion between the common input terminal and the speaker units, respectively, each of the plurality of digital filters having a filter coefficient being set

so as to correspond to each of the speaker units to be connected thereto, the filter coefficient being determined by a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern into which the audio signal is acoustically radiated by the plurality of speaker units.

A third embodiment of the invention is applied to a speaker system comprising: a common input terminal for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated; a plurality of speaker units which are arranged in honeycomb form; and a plurality of digital filters which are connected by insertion between the common input terminal and the speaker units, respectively, each of the plurality of digital filters having a filter coefficient being set so as to correspond to each of the speaker units to be connected thereto, the filter coefficient being determined by a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern into which the audio signal is acoustically radiated by the plurality of speaker units.

According to the first embodiment of the invention, a sound signal fed to the common input terminal is sent to the respective linearly arranged speaker units via the digital filters. A filter coefficient is set to each digital filter to reproduce

a target directivity pattern for acoustic radiation by a group of the linearly arranged speaker units. These filter coefficients are determined by a nonlinear optimization method so as to match the target directivity pattern. The filter coefficients take values which are different from each other and are set on a speaker unit basis. Accordingly, a digital filter is provided for every speaker unit, on a one-by-one basis, and each digital filter has an inherent filter coefficient, so that each speaker unit can be controlled individually. Thus, any arbitrary change of the filter coefficient in accordance with the target directivity pattern allows a speaker to electrically control its directivity more finely without changing the speaker structure.

According to the second embodiment of the invention, the speaker units are arranged on a plane in a matrix form. As a result, the speaker system is provided with a directivity that is determined by the planar arrangement of the speaker units. Such a directivity appears not only in a single arrangement direction as in the linearly arranged speaker system (e.g., in a horizontal direction), but also in a different arrangement direction (i.e., in a vertical direction). Therefore, in determining each filter coefficient by the nonlinear optimization method, the

directivity in the required horizontal and vertical directions is added, and by setting the thus determined filter coefficients to the respective digital filters, the directivity in the horizontal and vertical directions can be electrically controlled arbitrarily without changing the structure of the speaker system.

According to the third embodiment of the invention, the speaker units are arranged to be controlled in both horizontal and vertical directions by interaction between the plane arrangement and the digital filters, but also provides the following advantages. Compared to the speaker system having the two-dimensionally arranged matrix-like speaker system, the distance between speaker units can be narrowed. As a result, the speaker system can be down-sized, the frequency range (particularly, an upper limit frequency) whose directivity that is controllable can be increased, and the upper frequencies can be made consistent among the speaker units.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a block diagram showing an exemplary speaker system of the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view showing the appearance of a linearly arranged speaker system, which is a first embodiment of the invention;

Figure 3 is a flowchart showing a directivity controlling method according to the invention;

Figure 4 is a graph diagram illustrative of a Hanning window;

Figure 5 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=1) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 6 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=2) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 7 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=3) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 8 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=4) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 9 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=5) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 10 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=6) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 11 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=7) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 12 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=8) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 13 is a graph diagram showing the frequency responses of a FIR filter (m=9) of the invention and an analog filter;

Figure 14 is a graph diagram showing a two-dimensional directivity pattern at 20 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figure 15 is a graph diagram showing a two-dimensional directivity pattern at 100 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figure 16 is a graph diagram showing a two-dimensional directivity pattern at 400 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figure 17 is a graph diagram showing a two-dimensional directivity pattern at 1200 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figure 18 is a graph diagram showing a two-dimensional directivity pattern at 1400 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figures 19 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figures 20 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a three-dimensional directivity pattern at 20 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figures 21 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a three-dimensional directivity pattern at 100 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figures 22 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a three-dimensional directivity pattern at 400 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figures 23 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a three-dimensional directivity pattern at 1200 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figures 24 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a three-dimensional directivity pattern at 1400 Hz in the speaker system of the first embodiment;

Figure 25 is a perspective view showing the appearance of a two-dimensionally arranged speaker system, which is a second embodiment of the invention;

Figures 26 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern in the speaker system of the second embodiment;

Figures 27 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern at 20 Hz in the speaker system of the second embodiment;

Figures 28 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern at 100 Hz in the speaker system of the second embodiment;

Figures 29 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern at 400 Hz in the speaker system of the second embodiment;

Figures 30 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern at 1200 Hz in the speaker system of the second embodiment;

Figures 31 (a) to (d) are graph diagrams showing a target three-dimensional directivity pattern at 1400 Hz in the speaker system of the second embodiment;

Figure 32 is a front view showing a part of a speaker system, which is a third embodiment of the invention;

Figure 33 is a diagram illustrative of an exemplary arrangement of a honeycomb-like speaker array;

Figure 34 is a diagram showing the frequency characteristic of an error evaluation function of the honeycomblike speaker array;

Figure 35 is a diagram illustrative of an exemplary arrangement of a latticelike speaker array; and

Figure 36 is a graph diagram showing the frequency characteristic of an error evaluation function of the latticelike speaker array.

The preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the drawings.

A speaker system according to a first embodiment of the invention is shown in Figures 1 to 24. This embodiment is an example in which the invention is applied to a speaker array having a plurality of linearly-arranged speaker units.

As shown in Figure 1, the speaker system has a single common input signal terminal IN, and this common input signal terminal IN is branched into a plurality of speaker units SP_1 to SP_m so that each of the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m can be driven in parallel. To signal lines on the branch paths between the common input signal terminal IN and the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m are digital filters DF_1 to DF_m and amplifiers A_1 to A_m connected to the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m, respectively, on a one-to-one basis, as shown in Figure 1. The amplifiers A_1 to A_m are connected to the

digital filters DF_1 to DF_m, respectively, in series with each other. A signal line 4 from a controller 1 is connected to each of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m. The controller 1 sets inherent filter coefficient data αhi to each of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m through signal line 4. The filter coefficient data αhi is stored in a memory 2, and is sequentially set to each of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m by instruction from an input keyboard 3.

As shown in Figure 2, the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m (which in this example m=9) constitute a speaker array arranged linearly equidistantly in a single direction (e.g., in the y-axis direction). It is preferable that the physical properties of each of the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m, e.g., factors regulating the characteristics of the speaker unit (diameter, minimum resonance frequency, mass of the diaphragm, etc.) be equal to one another. Whether the reproducing frequency range is divided into three, i.e., woofer, squawker, and tweeter, or is of a full-range type, may be selected appropriately. Further, although not shown, whether each speaker unit is individually contained in an enclosure or all the speaker units are mounted on a single contiguous baffle plate or on a wall, etc. may be designed appropriately as the case may require, i.e., this design will depend upon the

particular use of the speaker system. In Figure 2, it is assumed that the x-axis indicates a direction of sound radiation, the y-axis, a direction of width (or the horizontal direction); and the z-axis, a direction of height (or the vertical direction).

Each of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m is implemented by a digital signal processor (DSP) and formed into an ordinary direct FIR (finite impulse response) filter. The hardware, although not shown, includes: an arithmetic and logic unit (ALU) for performing arithmetic and logic operations, which are the core of the signal processing; a sequencer (including a program counter, an instruction register, and a decoder) for controlling an operation sequence; a ROM (read only memory) for storing necessary programs; a RAM (random access memory) for storing data; registers for temporarily storing the data; an input/output device for receiving and sending the data from and to an external device; and buses for interconnecting the above elements.

As is known well, an output signal $Y_{(n)}$ of a direct FIR filter can be expressed as follows, with i, $x_{(n)}$ (input signal), and αhi (filter coefficient data), with i being a positive integer from 0 to N-1.

$$Y_{(n)} = \sum_{i=0}^{N-1} \alpha hi \cdot x_{(n)} \qquad \ldots (1)$$

Hence, the FIR filter can change its filter characteristic arbitrarily by changing its filter coefficient αhi. The filter coefficient αhi is sent from the controller 1 as described previously and stored in a register (filter coefficient register) within the DSP as also described previously.

The amplifiers A_1 to A_m are provided to amplify output signal levels of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m to levels large enough to drive the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m, respectively.

With the construction described above, a method of controlling the general directivity characteristic of sounds radiated from the speaker array consisting of speaker units SP_1 to SP_m will now be described in conjunction with the flow chart of Figure 3.

The control method will first be outlined. The general directivity characteristic of the speaker array is a collection of the sound pressures of individual sounds radiated from the respective speaker units SP_1 to SP_m. Thus, a desired characteristic can be obtained by controlling the output sound pressure of each of the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m. Thus, each of the filter coefficients of the digital filters DF_1 to

DF_m connected to the speaker units SP_1 to SP_n is set to a value matching a desired target directivity pattern. To find a correct filter coefficient, sounds are first actually produced from a speaker array, its output sounds are measured by a microphone, and filter coefficients are subsequently calculated based on the measured values. In order to provide the calculations, it is necessary to implement a system for measuring the output sound pressures of the speaker array and calculate filter coefficients so that the actual directivity corresponds (i.e., approximated) to the target directivity, while evaluating the actual directivity using the obtained output sound pressures. If there are a number of target directivities, filter coefficients matching a target directivity is obtained. The construction of a measuring system and a calculation method will hereunder be described.

As shown in Figure 1, to measure an actual directivity pattern to be developed on an xy plane (the horizontal direction), a plurality of measuring points n = 1 to N are set. Each of the measuring point being distant from each of the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m by a radius r in front thereof and each of the measuring points is distant from each other by an appropriate angle θ, as shown in Fig. 1. A microphone

(not shown) is disposed at each measuring point n to measure the sound pressures from the speaker array. Sound pressure signals outputted from the respective microphones can be taken as the actual directivity Hyn (ω) of the speaker array.

The actual directivity Hyn (ω) can be expressed by the following equation (2) (Step 105 in Figure 3)

$$\text{Hyn}\ (\omega) = \sum_{m=1}^{M} \text{Hfm}\ (\omega) \cdot \text{Hsmn}\ (\omega) \qquad \ldots (2)$$

where HFm (ω) is the transfer function of an m-th digital filter; and Hsmn (ω) is the transfer function from the output terminal of an m-th digital filter to the microphone at an n-th measuring point).

In order to determine whether the actual directivity Hyn (ω) either corresponds to or is approximated to a target directivity, an evaluation function f (ω) is set. The evaluation function f (ω) can be expressed by the following equation (3).

$$f\ (\omega) = \sum_{n=1}^{N} \text{Ci}\ \{\ |\ \text{Hyn}\ (\omega)\ |\ -\ \text{Gi}\ \}^2 \qquad \ldots (3)$$

where Ci is the weighing coefficient, which is to be set to an arbitrary value at the time of measurement (Step 101 in Figure 3), the degree of approximation being increased with larger weighing coefficient Ci;

Gi is the target sound pressure value [dB] at a measuring point i; i.e., the target sound pressure value corresponding to a target directivity). The target sound pressure value Gi is a value to be preset so that a target directivity pattern can be formed with respect to each measuring point n = 1 to N (Step 100 in Figure 3).

Since the calculation of optimal filter coefficients for implementing a target directivity pattern involves optimizing or minimizing the evaluation function f (ω), an actual directivity Hyn (ω) that minimizes the evaluation function f (ω) is calculated (Steps 105, 106, 107 in Figure 3). The calculation method to be employed is a nonlinear optimization method. In this regard, the "Broydon-Flether-Goldfarb-Shammo method" or the "Davidon-Fletcher Powell method" is preferably used as the nonlinear optimization algorithm although other such known algorithms can be employed.

Since the weighing coefficient Ci and the target sound pressure value Gi required for the calculation are provided in advance in equation (3) (Steps 100, 101 in Figure 3), the actual directivity Hyn (ω) must first be calculated from the transfer function Hfm (ω) of the digital filter and the transfer function Hsmn (ω) of the speaker and its radiation space.

The transfer function Hfm (ω) of a digital filter is expressed by the following equation.

$$Hfm\ (\omega) = Rmax\ (\omega) \cdot \sin\ (Xm\ (\omega)) \cdot \exp\ (j\theta m\ (\omega)) \quad \ldots (4)$$

where Rmax (ω): maximum amplitude of Hfm (ω)

[Rmax (ω) = 2 x r/m]

r: distance between the speaker and the measuring point

Xm (ω): parameter

θm (ω): phase of Xm (ω) and Hfm (ω)

The transfer function Hsmn (ω) of the speaker and the radiation space can be calculated as an approximation by a piston motion model of a circular diaphragm in an infinite rigid wall, once the diameter a, location, and measuring point of a speaker unit are defined. A sound pressure P (r, θ) from the circular diaphragm can be given by the following equation.

$$P\ (r,\theta) = \frac{2J\ (ka \sin\theta)}{ka \sin\theta} \cdot \frac{\exp\ (jkr)}{r} \quad \ldots (5)$$

where J: Bessel function

K: wavelength constant (sound speed/angular frequency)

a: diameter of a speaker unit

The sound pressure P (r,θ) calculated by equation (5) (Step 102 in Fig. 3) is used as the transfer function Hsmn (ω) of the speaker and the radiation space (Step 103 in Figure 3).

Since the transfer function Hfm (ω) obtained by equation (4) (Step 104 in Figure 3) is a frequency transfer function, it is subjected to an inverted fast Fourier transform (FFT^{-1}) process to be converted into an impulse response $h_{(t)}$ (Step 108 in Figure 3).

Then, as shown in Figure 4, the impulse response h(t) is processed with a window W(t), such as a Hanning window (Step 109 in Figure 3). The time length T of the window W(t) is

$$T = L \cdot \Delta t \qquad \ldots (6)$$

where L is the tap length of an FIR filter, and Δt is the sampling time.

The pulse response h(t) thus processed is sampled at an interval Δt, and the sampled value (amplitude) is multiplied by an appropriate coefficient α to obtain the coefficient αhi (Step 110 in Figure 3), where i = 1 to L. This signal processing is performed to prevent aggravation of errors due to impairment of the S/N ratio with the impulse response h(t) overflowing or being too small.

The coefficients αhi obtained are set to the respective digital filters (Steps 111, 112 in Figure 3).

The above operations are performed for each of the measuring point n = 1 to N and the obtained filter coefficients αhi are set to the respective digital filters DF_1 to DF_m.

When a signal is applied from the controller 1 to the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m through the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m to which the filter coefficients αhi have been set, a desired directivity pattern can be obtained from the speaker array.

Exemplary frequency response characteristics of the respective digital filters DF_1 to DF_m in the case where the filter coefficients αhi obtained by the above-mentioned operations are set to the respective digital filters DF_1 to DF_m are shown in Figures 5 to 13. In these examples, the number of speaker units used to form a speaker array is 9, with the corresponding digital filters being designated as m (m = 1 to 9). In each of Figures 5 to 13, reference character A designates the amplitude characteristic of an FIR filter; B, the phase characteristic of the FIR filter, while the amplitude characteristic a and phase characteristic b of an analog filter are additionally indicated for reference.

Using the digital filters DF_1 to DF_n having the characteristics shown in Figures 5 to 13, two-dimensional (xy plane) directivity patterns of a sound signal fed to the common input signal terminal IN are shown in Figures 14 to 18 by frequency. In each of Figures 14 to 18, reference symbol ··· x ··· x ··· designates a target pattern; and reference symbol ··· o ··· o ···, an actual pattern. As is understood from these figures, a directivity corresponding to a desired directivity was obtained over a range covering a low frequency (20 Hz) to a medium frequency (1400 Hz), although some side lobes appear.

Further, to facilitate the understanding, directivity patterns of a speaker array observed three-dimensionally from the same frequency parameters are shown in Figures 19 to 24, the speaker array consisting of the same 9 linearly arranged speaker units. As is understood from the respective figures, each pattern exhibits a directivity in a direction of about 45° on the xy plane and showing a consistent, semispherical distribution in the z-axis direction.

A speaker system, which is a second embodiment of the invention, is shown in Figures 25 to 31. This embodiment is an example in which the invention is applied to a speaker array consisting of a plurality

of speaker units arranged in matrix form (or in lattice form).

As shown in Figure 25, the speaker system has a single common input signal terminal IN, and this common input signal terminal IN is branched into a plurality of speaker units SP_1 to SP_m so that each of the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m can be driven in parallel. As shown in figure 25, digital filters DF_1 to DF_m are inserted on the signal lines of the respective branch paths reaching the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m so as to correspond to the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m extending in the vertical direction (in the Z direction), respectively, and digital filters DF_{01} to DF_{0m} and amplifiers A_1 to A_m connected to the filters in series are also inserted on the signal paths branched out from the output terminals of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m to the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m, respectively. Namely, the speaker array as shown in Figure 2 is arranged in nine rows in the vertical direction (in the z direction), and these arrays are connected to nine digital filters respectively. Although not shown, a controller 1 is connected to the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m and DF_{01} to DF_{0m} through a signal line as in the first embodiment (Figure 1), and filter coefficient data αhi stored in a memory 2 are set to

the controller 1 by operating an input keyboard 3 through the controller 1.

The speaker units SP_1 to SP_m constitute a speaker array while arranged on a plane in matrix form, keeping the same distance from one another in a two-dimensional direction (the yz plane). Similar to the first embodiment, it is preferable that the physical properties of each of the speaker units SP_1 to SP_m be equal to one another. The structure of fixing the speaker units may be selected appropriately, depending on the particular application; the speaker units may be disposed in enclosures, which are mounting bodies, or on a wall. Further, the reproducing frequency range may also be designed arbitrarily. In the axes shown in Figure 25, the x-axis indicates a direction of sound radiation; the y-axis, a direction of width (or a horizontal direction); and the z-axis, a direction of height (or a vertical direction).

For the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m and DF_{01} to DF_{0m}, direct FIR filters using DSPs are employed as in the first embodiment. The same applies to the amplifiers A_1 to A_m, using power amplifiers, each of which has an appropriate amplification factor.

A method of controlling directivity is also similar to that of the first embodiment. The filter coefficients αhi are calculated according to the

flowchart in Figure 3 and set to the respective digital filters DF_1 to DF_m and DF_{01} to DF_{0m}. In this case, the microphones are arranged so as to constitute a spherical surface of which the center is at a position separated from the central position of the speaker array by a predetermined distance.

The frequency responses shown in Figures 5 to 13 of the first embodiment will be applied to those of the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m and DF_{01} to DF_{0m} in the case where the filter coefficients αhi calculated by the above procedures are set. Here, the speaker system may be constituted with one digital filter and one amplifier for each speaker unit if the properties of the digital filters arranged in the vertical direction (z direction) and the properties of the digital filters arranged in the horizontal direction (y direction) are compounded. In short, eighty-one kinds of filter properties are required for 9 x 9 (= 81) speaker units.

The directivity control results by a speaker array consisting of a total of 81 speaker units with a 9 x 9 arrangement are shown in Figures 26 to 31. These examples are those in which the target directivity appears at about 75° on the xy plane, at about 60° on the yz plane, and at a generally upper right position viewed from front (toward the speaker

array). As is understood from the Figures 26 to 31, a satisfactory directivity over the range of low frequencies (around 100 Hz) to a middle frequency (1400 Hz) is exhibited, although there appear some side lobes..

A speaker system, which is a third embodiment of the invention, is shown in Figures 32 to 34. The feature of this embodiment is that a honeycomb-like speaker array is employed.

That is, as shown in Figure 32, a plurality of speaker units are arranged so as to be staggered, and as shown in Figure 33, these speaker units are distributed on each side of multiple hexagons as a whole. The speaker units are respectively connected to digital filters (not shown) each having different property.

In the case of a such honeycomb-like speaker array, the distance between two adjacent speaker units is $\sqrt{3}/2 = 0.866$ times the distance between two adjacent speaker units of a lattice-like speaker array shown in Figure 35. The narrowing of the distance between the speaker units means that the speaker array gets closer to a point sound source to such extent of narrowing, and this means, in terms of performance, that the upper limit of frequencies at which the directivity can be controlled is increased, and in

terms of shape and dimension, that the size and number of speaker units are reduced. Thus, the honeycomb-like speaker array is more advantageous than the lattice-like speaker array.

Figure 34 shows an exemplary frequency characteristic of the error evaluation function of a speaker array consisting of a total of 61 speaker units arranged in honeycomb form. As is understood from Figure 34, the upper limit frequency at which the directivity can be controlled is as high as about 1800 Hz both on the 0° axis and on the 30° axis.

On the other hand, in the case of the lattice-like speaker array, a total of 81 speaker units are employed. Its characteristic is, as shown in Figure 36, the upper limit frequency at which the directivity can be controlled is 1800 Hz on the 0° axis, while that drops down to 1500 Hz on the 45° axis.

Thus, the lattice-like speaker array exhibits variations in the upper limit frequency at which the directivity can be controlled, and also involves some additional wasteful speaker units, the honeycomb-like speaker array exhibits high upper limit frequencies and can be implemented with a fewer number of speaker units.

In the third embodiment, the process of setting required filter coefficients αhi to the respective

digital filters DF_1 to DF_m by using direct FIR filters as the digital filters DF_1 to DF_m and calculating the filter coefficients for controlling directivity is the same as that in the first and second embodiments. Thus, the drawings and description of the first and second embodiments will similarly apply to the third embodiment. In addition, the microphones are arranged so as to constitute a spherical surface of which the center is at a position separated from the central position of the speaker array by a predetermined distance.

As has been described, according to the first embodiment of the invention, the filter coefficients for implementing a desired directivity pattern are set to the digital filters connected to linearly arranged speaker units. Therefore, a fine directivity control can be performed electrically with the same speaker structure and arbitrary directivity patterns can be obtained by changing the filter coefficients.

According to the second embodiment of the invention, a directivity pattern not only in the horizontal direction but also in the vertical direction can be controlled electrically while using a planar speaker array in a matrix form without changing the structural arrangement of a speaker system.

According to the third embodiment of the invention, the directivity pattern not only in the horizontal direction, but also in the vertical direction, can be controlled electrically while using a honeycomb-like planar speaker array. In addition, compared to the speaker array in matrix (lattice) form, the upper limit frequency at which the directivity is controllable can be increased, while the number of units involved can be reduced.

CLAIMS

1. A speaker system comprising:

a common input terminal for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated;

a plurality of linearly arranged speaker units;

a plurality of digital filters connected between said common input terminal and said speaker units, respectively, said plurality of digital filters having filter coefficients corresponding to said speaker units, respectively; and

a controller means, coupled to said digital filters, for determining said filter coefficients by a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern for acoustic radiation from said plurality of speaker units.

2. The speaker system as defined in claim 1, further comprising a plurality of acoustic receivers for receiving acoustic outputs of said speaker units, respectively, said acoustic receivers being coupled to said controller, and said controller determining said filter coefficients in accordance with the target directivity pattern and in accordance with outputs of said acoustic receivers.

3. The speaker system as defined in claim 1, further comprising a plurality of amplifiers connected between said plurality of digital filters and said speaker units, respectively, for amplifying outputs of said digital filters.

4. The speaker system as defined in claim 1, further comprising a memory for storing the determined filter coefficients, and an input device for inputting instruction signals to said controller.

5. The speaker system as defined in claim 1, wherein said controller is a CPU.

6. The speaker system as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said speaker units is of a same construction.

7. A speaker system comprising:

a common input terminal for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated;

a plurality of speaker units, said speaker units being arranged on a plane in a matrix form;

a plurality of digital filters connected between said common input terminal and said speaker units, each of said plurality of digital filters having a

filter coefficient which corresponds to said speaker units; and

a controller, coupled to said digital filters, for determining said filter coefficients according to a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern for acoustic radiation from said plurality of speaker units.

8. The speaker system as defined in claim 7, further comprising a plurality of acoustic receivers for receiving acoustic outputs of said speaker units, said acoustic receivers being coupled to said controller, and said controller determining said filter coefficients in accordance with the target directivity pattern and in accordance with outputs of said acoustic receivers.

9. The speaker system as defined in claim 7, further comprising a plurality of amplifiers, an output of each of said amplifier being connected to an input of a different one of said speaker units.

10. The speaker system as defined in claim 7, wherein each of said speaker units is of a same construction.

11. A speaker system comprising:

a common input terminal for receiving an audio signal to be acoustically radiated;

a plurality of speaker units, said speaker units arranged on a plane in a honeycomb form;

a plurality of digital filters connected between said common input terminal and said speaker units, each of said plurality of digital filters having a filter coefficient which corresponds to said speaker units; and

a controller, coupled to said digital filters, for determining said filter coefficients by a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern for acoustic radiation from said plurality of speaker units.

12. The speaker system as defined in claim 11, further comprising a plurality of acoustic receivers for receiving acoustic outputs of said speaker units, said acoustic receivers being coupled to said controller, and said controller determining the filter coefficient in accordance with the target directivity pattern and in accordance with outputs of said acoustic receivers.

13. The speaker system as defined in claim 11, wherein each of said speaker units has a same construction.

14. A method of controlling a directivity of a speaker system having digital filters connected between a common input signal terminal and a plurality of speaker units, each of said digital filters providing an output in accordance with a filter coefficient, said method comprising the steps of:

arranging said speaker units;

determining a filter coefficient for each of said digital filters by a nonlinear optimization method in accordance with a target directivity pattern for acoustic radiation from said plurality of speaker units; and

setting each of said digital filters with the determined filter coefficients, respectively.

15. The method as defined in claim 14, wherein said arranging step includes linearly arranging said speaker units.

16. The method as defined in claim 14, wherein said arranging step includes arranging said speaker units in a matrix form.

17. The method as defined in claim 14, wherein said arranging step includes arranging said speaker units in a honeycomb form.

18. A speaker system, substantially as described with reference to figures 1 to 24, or figures 25 to 31 and 35 and 36, or figures 32 to 34, of the accompanying drawings.

19. A method of controlling directivity of a speaker system, substantially as described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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Patents Act 1977
Exan. .ier's report to the Comptroller under Section 17 (The Search Report)

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Databases (see over)

(i) UK Patent Office

(ii) ONLINE DATABASES:WPI

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Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of claims 1 TO 17

Category (see over)	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
A	US 4472834 A (YAMAMURO ET AL)	
A	US 4399328 A (FRANSSEN)	
X	JP 020239798 A (TOA ELECTRIC) see abstract	1,7,11, 14

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